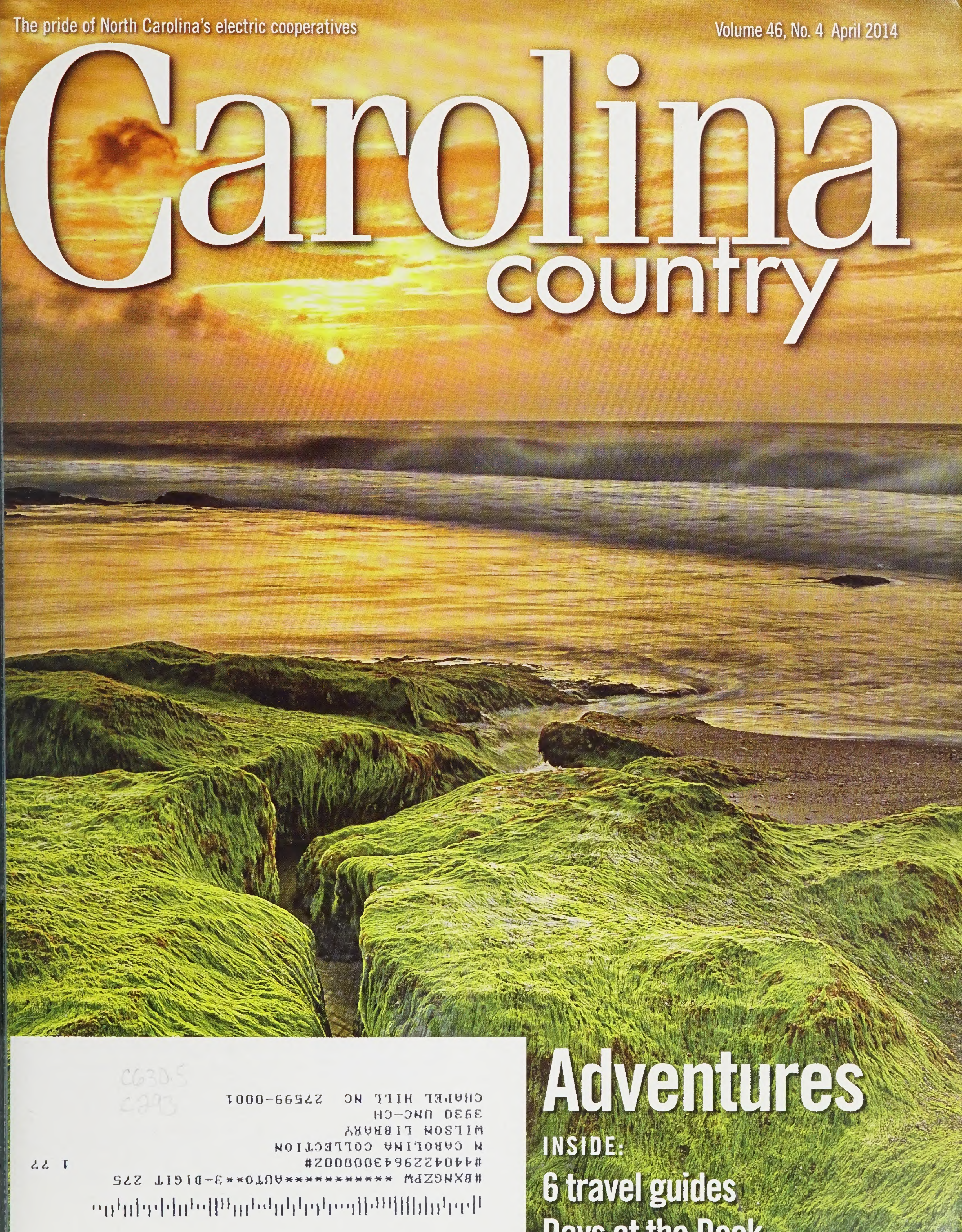
The pride of North Carolina's electric cooperatives

Volume 46, No. 4 April 2014

Carolina country



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Lake Lure's flowering bridge

Co-ops, coal & regulations—page 12

Analog and digital display
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Welcome a new Digital Revolution. With the release of the dynamic new ***Compendium***, those boxy, plastic wrist calculators of the past have been replaced by this luxurious LCD chronograph that is sophisticated enough for a formal evening out, but rugged and tough enough to feel at home in a cockpit, camping expedition or covert mission.

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April 2014
Volume 46, No. 4

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Sunrise at the coquina rocks just north of Fort Fisher, at the southern tip of New Hanover County. (Photography by Chris Sheridan of Wake Forest, a member of Wake EMC)

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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to nearly 900,000 homes and businesses. The 26 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

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Your cooperative sends you Carolina Country as a convenient, economical way to share with its members information about services, director elections, meetings and management decisions. The magazine also carries legal notices that otherwise would be published in other media at greater cost.

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Reliability of the electric grid is critical

By Sen. Lisa Murkowski

No other electricity network on Earth provides as much power to as many people as reliably and affordably as the American grid. But keeping the lights on is a highly complex undertaking.

Diversity is the key characteristic of the U.S. electric system. No single source provides a majority of the nation's power and each makes a distinct contribution to electric generation: coal (37 percent); natural gas (30 percent); nuclear (19 percent); hydropower (6.8 percent); and other renewables (5.4 percent).

The energy mix that sustains the grid is changing. Coal has been the leading fuel source for decades, but its use has fallen as natural gas use has increased. The use of renewable resources is also increasing, with wind and solar adding record levels of new capacity in 2012. The U.S. Energy Information Administration predicts these resources, combined with other renewables, including hydropower, will reach the same market penetration (16 percent) as nuclear by 2040.

Maintaining the stability of the electric grid as coal and nuclear baseload plants come offline as a result of both market forces and regulatory constraints, while managing an increasingly variable energy mix, is the central challenge to ensuring reliability.

Will tomorrow's grid be less reliable?

In recent years, the electric industry has invested significant resources to address both physical and cyber security threats and vulnerabilities.

This winter's polar vortex resulted in at least 50,000 megawatts of power outages and should serve as a wake-up call to the importance of baseload capacity in maintaining grid reliability. During this weather event, nuclear plants operated at over 90 percent capacity and one key system was forced to call upon 89 percent of the coal capacity slated for retirement next year. Our reliance on installed, dispatchable power generation during extreme weather demonstrates why diversity of baseload capacity and robust transmission and distribution systems are necessary to secure grid reliability.

Federal regulations impact grid reliability

The impact of new emissions regulations on power plants, as proposed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, coupled with federal government preferences and subsidies for power generation and use, must be taken into consideration. While EPA has failed to analyze the cumulative impact of its rules, government estimates predict 10 to 20 percent of existing coal capacity could be retired by the middle of the next decade. While these should be recognized as red flags, the federal government continues to give short shrift to the potential consequences of its rules and regulations—thereby increasing impacts to the nation's electric reliability.

Call to action

Federal regulators and legislators must recognize the importance of maintaining and improving the grid's reliability, affordability and environmental performance in balance. To that end, policymakers must understand the impact of government requirements on baseload capacity and grid reliability. At a minimum, federal agencies must formally review and recognize the realistic and predictable consequences of their regulatory actions with the dual goal of prevention and mitigation.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) is the ranking member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The senior senator from Alaska in 2013 received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for her outstanding support for rural electrification and public power.

To stay informed on this and related issues go to NCAction.coop

Snowed geese

These were outside my house near Smithfield.

Crystal Summerlin Johnson

Ready for duty

We thought it would be fun to make a Union Power snow lineman.

Stacey, Joey, Jordan and Hayden Query, Mint Hill, Union Power Cooperative

Lessons from Germany

"Lessons From Germany" ["Between the Lines," March 2014] should prompt a public discussion of the merits, or the lack thereof, of encouraging the use of solar and wind energy in the electric power grid beyond current levels. Solar and wind energy are promoted as ways to reduce carbon emissions from burning of fossil fuels. But the article accurately notes how carbon emissions have actually increased as Germany shut down nuclear reactors and generates more electricity with solar and wind farms. When the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow, back-up systems must be operated inefficiently. Emissions are destined to increase even more as Germany fires up recently approved hard coal plants over the next two years. The coal plants are intended to mitigate Germany's high cost of electricity (the highest in Europe) that is largely attributed to subsidization of solar and wind energy. The high cost of energy has hit the middle class hard and inhibits business investment. So where are the benefits from solar and wind energy? One wonders if it is wise for N.C. to continue to subsidize the development of solar and wind energy.

Burdette Joesten, Southport, Brunswick EMC

More lessons from Germany

In "Lessons From Germany," you made it sound as if Germans are glad to pay such high electricity prices. The opposite is more the truth. I am from Germany and don't know many Germans who like to pay those ultra-high rates. I also haven't met many who like those wind power towers or solar farms. From 100 Germans you might find five that find eco-power good. The rest believe it is not affordable.

In Germany, you pay a monthly flat rate for power, and at the end of the year, you are audited to see if you used more or less than what you paid for. Most people I know there end up paying back an additional $250 or more.

My mother in Germany pays $75 per month for a 645 square-foot apartment. She is single, has no air conditioner and no furnace, just TV, stove and radio. I pay maybe $200 in a bad month and I have four people in my 1,800 square-foot house.

Kat Amberger, Tar Heel, Four County EMC

Primitive

I have a log cabin that I am almost finished building from an old tobacco barn. I plan to set it up as a primitive cabin as it would have looked in the early 1900s. All of the materials were previously used. The chimney is built from rocks I picked up, as well as from old home-place chimneys. I have my mom's wood cookstove and a previously used outhouse.

William T. Whitaker, Davie County, EnergyUnited

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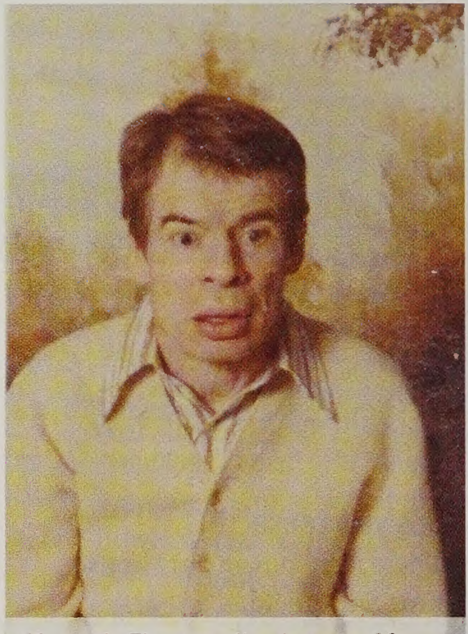

My uncle Thurman lived to age 62.

The simple life of Thurman T. Howard

By Darlene S. Brown

I was born in 1957, a time when the world was changing, a new era was beginning. My Mama was born in 1933, a time when life was hard, there were few jobs, little money and most families had many mouths to feed. It inspired me so much to hear the stories of her family's struggles and how they faced everyday trial and tribulation.

My Mama's brother, Thurman T. Howard, was born in 1935 on a cold December morning. Mama was young, but the older siblings remember that day so well. In those days babies were born at home, with no prenatal care, so if there were any difficulties with the birth the child would die or be born with birth defects.

Thurman's birth was very difficult with terrible complications. The hometown doctor was called because of the condition that both Thurman and my Grandma were in. The doctor examined Thurman's still body for normal reactions that a newborn shows, but there was nothing. The doctor told the family the devastating news that their son and brother had "bled at the brain" during birth and would never have a normal life. This was sad news for my grandparents, but they loved their baby son and would care for him the best way they could.

Years passed and Thurman grew up with the mental capacity of a baby. My Mama and aunts taught Thurman to walk with their help and to speak small words if he needed something. Other children didn't understand Thurman and would laugh at him because of the way he walked and talked. In his simple world, he thought they were playing with him, but Mama knew they were making fun of him and she would always chase them away.

Thurman lived at home for 16 years, but it became very difficult to care for him, so my grandparents chose to place him in Caswell Center in Kinston. After a time, not having the one-on-one care he had at home, he stopped walking and talking. I remember going to visit him when I was a child, and he loved to see us. That made me smile.

Thurman lived in Caswell Center until he died at 62. The funeral was held at Caswell because this was his home. Family and other patients attended the service. Even the preacher was mentally challenged but was able to deliver a beautiful sermon.

Thurman lived a simple life. He was loved and admired by those who knew him. I respected him with all my heart and learned at an early age never to look down on someone with mental disabilities.

Darlene S. Brown lives in Pink Hill and is a member of Tri-County EMC.

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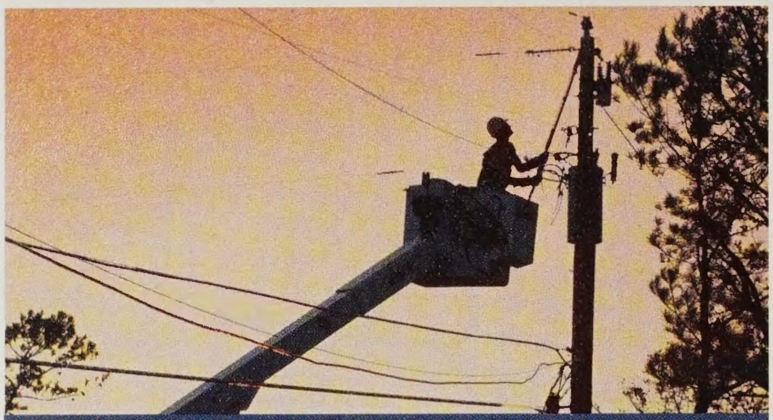


You know the kind

Touchstone Energy cooperatives nationally have produced a new music video, "You Know the Kind," by Smiley Miller (Sam Tahhan) and Tashdar Creative. The 4-minute song and video showcase the work of electric cooperative line crews who build and maintain electricity distribution systems.

See the video on carolinacountry.com.

How many does it take to change a light bulb?

How many blues musicians does it take to replace an inefficient light bulb with an energy-efficient one?

Five: One to replace the light bulb, and four to play sad songs about how the old, inefficient bulbs went away, and maybe they weren't so bad after all.

Ice, snow and wind cause winter power outages statewide

Winter storms in mid-February and early March left many North Carolinians without electric power, stranded on roads and begging for spring.

During the Feb. 12 storm named Pax some 20 inches of snow fell in the mountains while ice pelted many eastern counties. Two people suffered heart attacks in Burke County evidently while shoveling snow, and a Pender County man died when a tree limb broke off an ice-covered tree and struck him outside his home in a mobile home park in Rocky Point. Traffic accidents also claimed lives in Moore and Chatham counties.

About 133,000 homes and businesses were without electricity at some point after the February storm. In ice storms, outages often get worse after weather improves as ice-laden tree branches thaw, spring up and come back into contact with power lines. Electric cooperatives reported about 20,600 member-accounts without power.

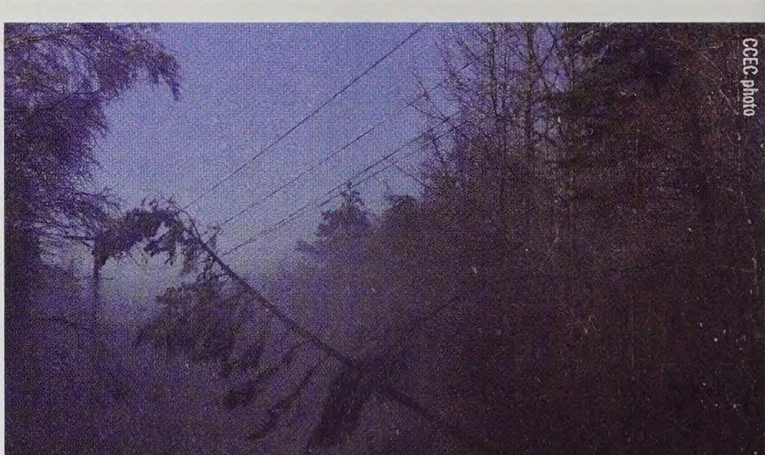
Co-ops that were not hit so hard and their contractors sent line crews, as usual, to aid with power restoration efforts at other cooperatives in the state. The deployment of crews is part of a mutual-aid agreement shared among the nation's nearly 1,000 electric cooperatives to help one another in times of emergency.

The storm named Ulysses March 6 proved much harder for electric utilities to handle. Ice accumulation on power lines caused widespread outages in Alamance, Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Iredell, Orange, Randolph and Wilkes counties. Even as the weather warmed the next day, about 463,000 services were without power statewide, including 62,600 outages among cooperative members, many of them extending into the weekend. Trees and limbs had to be cleared before utility crews could safely reach affected areas.

In signing a state of emergency declaration following the March storm, Gov. Pat McCrory said, "While we have become very experienced in winter storm response during the past two months, each storm is different and can require different resources. Today, we're seeing more power outages than we had during any of the previous storms this year."

PEMC photo

Piedmont EMC faced this kind of damage after the March 6 storm. The scene is on Buckhorn Rd. in Efland, Orange County.



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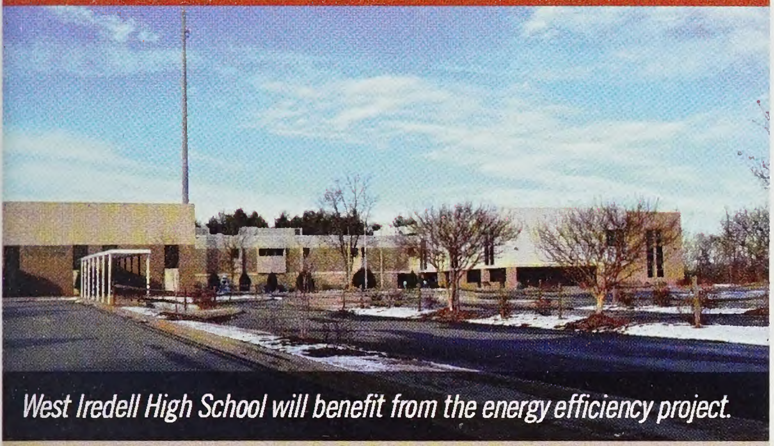
Carteret-Craven line crews prepare to head out to a nearby co-op, Four County EMC, to help in power restorations efforts after the February storm.

CO-OPS & COMMUNITY JOBS



West Iredell High School will benefit from the energy efficiency project.

EnergyUnited helps to fund an Iredell County school's energy efficiency upgrades

EnergyUnited, the Touchstone Energy cooperative headquartered in Statesville, is helping to provide local students a better learning environment by securing $1.3 million for the Iredell County school system. The package of a $1 million loan and a $300,000 grant came from the USDA Rural Economic Development (REDLG) program. When combined with $640,000 in matching county funds and a $60,000 zero-interest matching loan from EnergyUnited itself, the funding will provide $2 million to improve energy efficiency at West Iredell High School.

The school will replace current T12 lighting with more energy-efficient LED and compact fluorescent lighting. The school's heating, ventilation and air conditioning system will also be upgraded. The improvements are expected to save the school system $35,000 to $48,000 a year in energy costs, as well as provide a more comfortable learning and teaching environment for students and teachers.

Kenny Miller, assistant superintendent for facilities/planning at Iredell-Statesville Schools, said: "REDLG funding is one of many partnerships between Iredell-Statesville Schools and EnergyUnited. EnergyUnited continues to be a model partner with the community and schools through Bright Ideas grants, energy efficiency projects, innovative project financing and support through economic and consistent power generation."

"EnergyUnited has had a long-standing relationship with the Iredell-Statesville school district," said Tim Holder, EnergyUnited's vice president of sales and economic development. "We saw this as a good opportunity to continue to work with and give back to the community by focusing on a number of important energy efficiency measures at this school."

The funding EnergyUnited acquired from the USDA will continue to benefit the community. The $300,000 zero-interest grant also serves as a revolving fund for EnergyUnited. When repaid, the co-op can then loan these funds back into the community for other projects.

—Renee Gannon

Pee Dee EMC's lights-for-farmers program wins a national service award

Michael Lynch

Pee Dee Electric's marketing representative Todd Moore (right) accepts the NRECA Community Service Award for Energy Efficiency from NRECA board president Curtis Nolan.

At its annual meeting in Nashville a month ago, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) honored Wadesboro-based Pee Dee EMC with the association's Community Service Award for Energy Efficiency. Only one co-op is cited each year for this award.

Consistent with electric cooperative's longstanding commitment to saving their members money through greater efficiency, Pee Dee Electric developed a program to install more efficient lighting at local poultry and livestock facilities, offering rebates to members who purchase the new bulbs.

"This program exemplifies the cooperative difference: Pee Dee Electric is looking out for their members, finding innovative technologies to help them save electricity and money," said NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson.

Pee Dee Electric makes high-efficiency agricultural lighting available to farmers to replace existing high-wattage incandescent bulbs in poultry houses and livestock barns. The LED bulbs pay for themselves in energy savings in six months. To date, Pee Dee Electric has sold 102,000 of these energy-efficient bulbs to more than 542 farmers. The calculated daily savings for the average poultry house that replaces 60-watt incandescent bulbs with 8-watt LED bulbs is 82.4 kilowatt-hours per day.

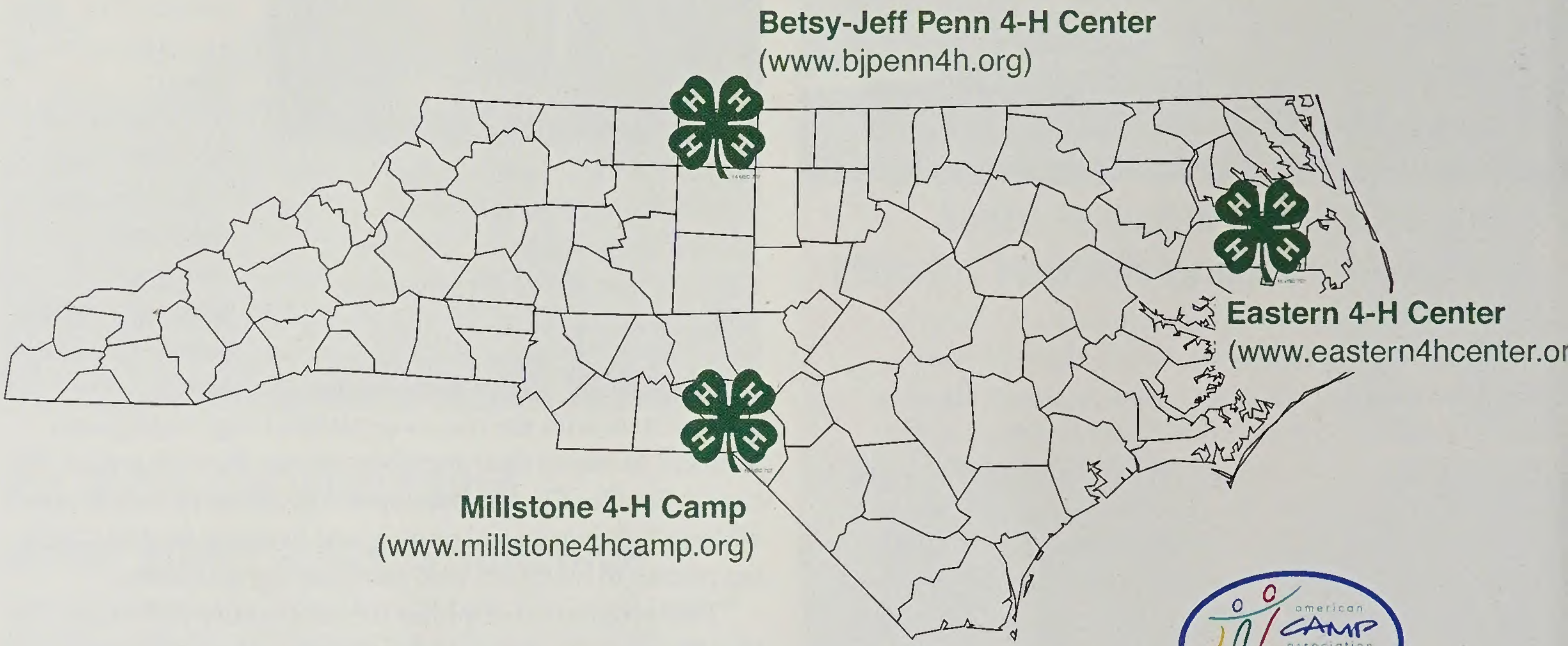
COOPERATIVE
ACTION NE

Michael E.C.Gery

At work in Nashville

Alec Linton, a high school senior from Wayne County, represented Tri-County EMC and North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association annual meeting in Nashville last month. As a member of the cooperatives' Youth Leadership Council he helped staff the Cooperative Action Network that coordinates legislative concerns for electric co-ops.

North Carolina's 4-H Camps and Centers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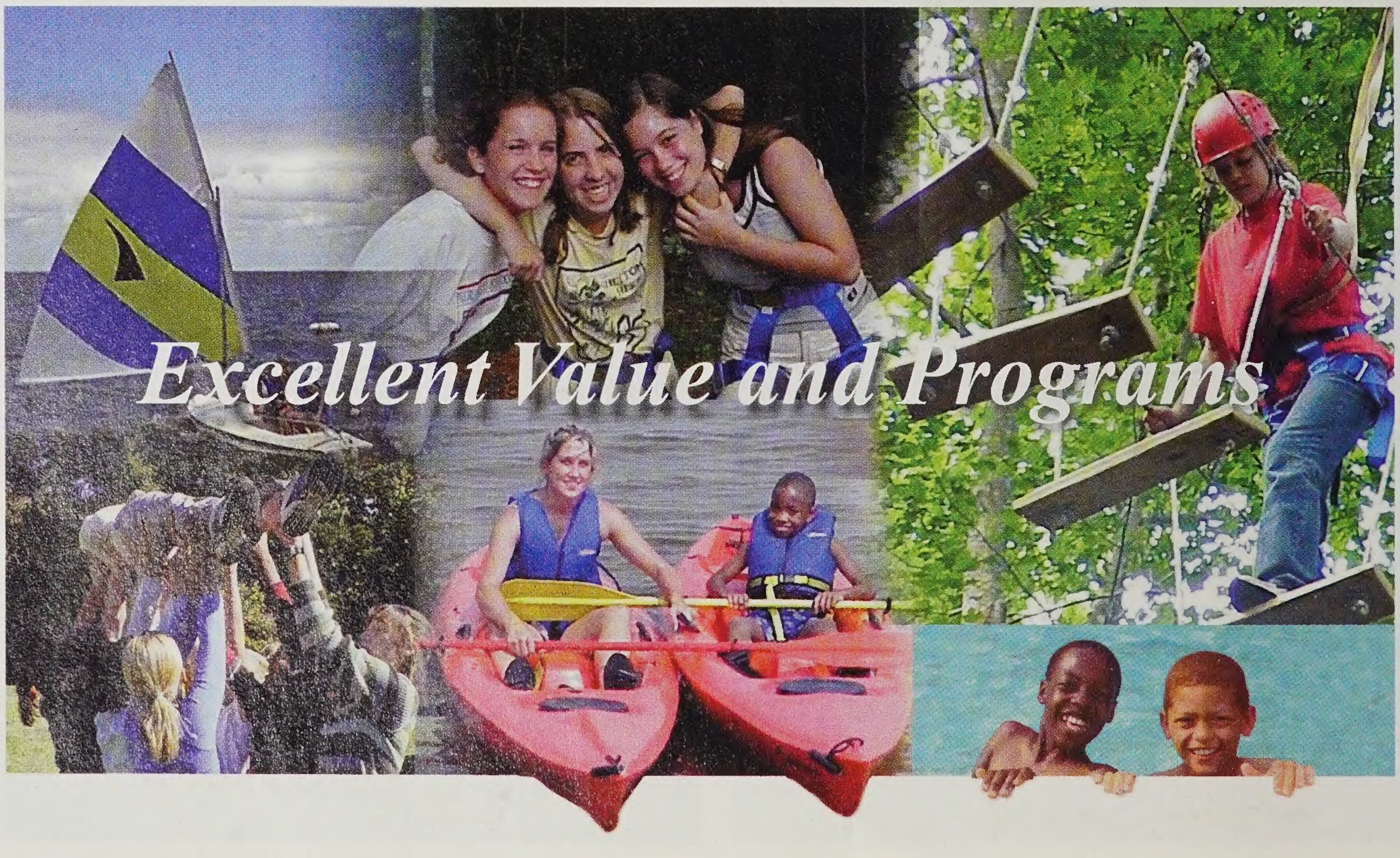
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Co-ops ask to balance regulations and stewardship

k Southern

Coal trains at Lambert's Point Docks in Norfolk, Va.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering new environmental standards for coal power plants that would tighten regulations limiting power plant emissions.

While complying with these standards could cost electric cooperatives nationwide millions of dollars, "the most pressing issue and the one that could have the biggest impact on us is the proposed rule that will come out this June on carbon dioxide emissions for existing power plants," says Kirk Johnson, senior vice president of government relations at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Cooperatives nationally are more dependent on coal-fired generation than those in North Carolina and the rest of the industry. The reason lies in the tumultuous decade of the 1970s.

Electric co-ops and coal

For much of the 1970s, the nation was caught up in a complicated energy crisis that involved disruptions in Middle Eastern oil supplies and a conviction the world was running out of oil and natural gas. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter called on the U.S. to "shift to plentiful coal" to meet its growing energy needs. A year later, Congress went further, passing the Powerplant and Industrial Fuel Use Act to block the use of natural gas or oil to generate electricity.

Electric cooperatives stepped up to meet the challenge, adding 15,600 megawatts of coal-based capacity during the natural gas ban. "That's when we built 70 percent of our coal generation, during the period leading up to and during the Fuel Use Act," says John Novak, NRECA executive director of environmental issues. "We built these units when there was a need to build them and when the policy of the federal government was that coal was a domestic fuel source we should be using."

The Fuel Use Act was repealed in 1987, but co-op efforts to help the nation meet its energy needs during a time of crisis have had long-term consequences. About 70 percent of the power generated by co-ops around the nation comes from coal plants, compared to about 37 percent for the industry overall, according to Novak.

North Carolina's electric cooperatives power supply portfolio is more diverse. Only about 14 percent of the power supplied by the state's cooperatives is generated by coal-fueled plants.

"This is a significant issue of national environmental and economic importance," said Joe Brannan, CEO of NCEMC, the power supply entity owned by the state's cooperatives. "North Carolina's electric cooperatives do not own coal plants but our contracts for wholesale power do have coal generation in the mix. While we don't own coal, we are not immune from the impact of these regulations."

Balancing regs and costs

NRECA's Novak notes that coal-fired units still have many years of effective life and that cooperatives have already invested significantly to meet EPA regulations. Coupled with the other rules now being considered by the EPA, the rule on carbon dioxide emissions could be "the straw that breaks the camel's back," Novak says, making the continued operation of some plants financially unfeasible. If complying with the standard proves too costly, it may make more economic sense to shut down some units rather than spend millions to comply.

Cooperatives believe environmental regulation needs to be balanced with a realistic assessment of costs and benefits. The situation is particularly critical with regard to carbon dioxide emissions. "We're asking the EPA to recognize the unique circumstances of not-for-profit electric cooperatives and to work with us to come up with a fair solution that allows us to continue to provide affordable and reliable power to our members," says Novak.

Co-op representatives, along with NRECA staff, have met with EPA officials to make their case. Co-ops also continue to work on upgrades and new technologies to make their plants even cleaner while still providing the service the public expects.

"Our folks are engaged in all kinds of activities to improve the efficiency and environmental performance of our power plants across the board," says Johnson. "They're very serious about finding solutions that are affordable for members."

Stricter regs on new plants

The EPA also is proposing emissions standards that require carbon capture and storage at new coal plants. NRECA's CEO Jo Ann Emerson has pointed out that "This technology does not exist on a commercial scale at any power plant anywhere in the world."

Acknowledging the burden such requirements will place on the electricity generation industry, the Dept. of Energy's deputy assistant secretary for clean coal, S. Julio Friedmann, told a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee recently that EPA's plans to require carbon capture and sequestration technology for new coal plants would likely cause a 70 to 80 percent surge in wholesale coal-based electricity costs. While those figures aren't new, the public admission by a senior Administration official caught a lot of attention.

"This cost increase is unconscionable but not surprising," Emerson said. "In light of the administration confirming our deepest concerns about the cost impact of the proposed regulation on new power plants, the rule should be immediately withdrawn and reconsidered. It is unjustifiable for the EPA to push through regulations that rely on technology that would eliminate the domestic and reliable option of coal in the future." Emerson said.

What you can do

To stay informed on this and related issues, sign up for alerts at NCAction.coop.

This is the 16th in a series by the North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives. See the others at carolinacountry.com. Reed Karaim of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association contributed to this article.

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Buddy's creed

By Michael E.C. Gery

It's Buddy Creed's creed: "Find a way to get it done."

When he came to work as South River Electric's system engineer 45 years ago this month, the 30-year-old cooperative's infrastructure needed an overhaul. The co-op had about 10,000 member accounts, mostly small country farms and houses. "Lines ran everywhere and every way," Creed remembers. "Across fields, whatever they needed to reach the service. If there ever was a problem, it took linemen so long just to find out where the problem was."

Buddy Creed found a way to get it done. With Marvin O. Marshall as the new general manager, they developed a work plan, acquired financing, instituted safety standards and rebuilt the system. At the same time, growth in western Harnett and Cumberland counties near Fort Bragg required the EMC to build new facilities in that area. And soon after he started, three ice storms ravaged the system within two months. Buddy and the South River EMC crews found a way to get it done.

Born and raised in Surry County, Buddy Gray Creed graduated from Gaston Technical Institute (now Gaston College) in electrical engineering. Newly married to Lynda Pell, he worked for Virginia Electric Power Co. for five years. A Surry County neighbor and family friend, Kelly Hutchens, then general manager of the Surry-Yadkin EMC cooperative, advised him to apply for the South River EMC system engineer job when it opened.

"I wish I had taken notes and pictures of what's happened here in the last 45 years," Creed says. "It really is rewarding to have seen it develop into what it is today."

South River EMC today employs 107 people and serves about 42,000 member accounts over some 5,377 miles of line and 30 substations in Cumberland, Harnett, Sampson, Bladen and Johnston counties. In the last 15 years the co-op has deployed state-of-the-art technology to map its system to GPS coordinates, install engineering analysis programs, streamline inventory control, and track projects in real time. Customer information software, an automated phone system, 24-hour account access and a high-tech outage management system expanded its customer service. "I don't even know what some of this technology is called," Creed admits. But he found a way to get it done, and it works.

The South River EMC board appointed Buddy Creed CEO when Marvin Marshall retired in 1996. "At that time, there were three computers here. And one was a mainframe. Since then we have placed a priority on using the right technology for the job."

When Hurricane Fran ripped through central North Carolina in 1996, South River EMC could have used today's technology. With all but maybe 100 services disconnected—and the co-op's communication tower down as well—Creed first had to find a way to communicate the disaster. He did, and seven days later power was restored systemwide. Everyone had pitched in, including many community members and directors, such as Carlton Martin of Martin's Meats in Godwin who supplied steaks and ice.

When the U.S. Department of Defense decided to contract its base electricity systems, Creed figured the cooperative could make an offer to Fort Bragg and Pope Air Force Base. Sure to be a massive undertaking, he joined forces with three other neighboring Touchstone Energy cooperatives and found a way to get it done. They formed Sandhills Utility Services and in 2003 won the contract, competing with larger utilities. "It was new to the Corps of Engineers, too," he recalls. "They appreciated learning along with us. It was a real cooperative effort." Sandhills not only upgraded Bragg's system but also expanded as the base has and provided reliable service to this critical operation.

Known for innovation, honesty and fairness, Buddy Creed retires after 45 years with South River Electric.

At the same time, South River EMC's aged office facilities needed attention. Creed in 2000 found a way to get it done: a 42,000 square-foot headquarters outside Dunn, and later a consolidation of district operations in a new building at Fayetteville.

Perhaps the biggest change he's seen occurred in the farm community. When he began at the co-op, farms were small, many growing tobacco that used one or two barns. The 2004 Tobacco Buyout saw small farms selling their allotments. "Mega-farms" in the transition bought acreage and the barns. Today these farms run on hundreds of acres growing everything from cotton to cantaloupes, a super challenge for an electric utility that has needed to "beef up the backbone," as Creed puts it, and keep the power on.

A hallmark of Buddy Creed's management has been "to treat all members fairly." Balancing the needs of small households with mega-farms is not easy. But South River Electric's principal is to do just that. "We make sure that every rate class pays their way," Creed says. "Whatever it costs to serve them, that is what they pay. Some don't agree with that, but it's the right way to do it." And despite challenges to that practice, Buddy Creed found a way to get it done.

Looking toward retirement this year, Buddy Creed says he will miss South River EMC. But he has plenty to look forward to: Lynda, the families of his sons, Chris and Clint, and hunting and fishing, especially along Pungo River.

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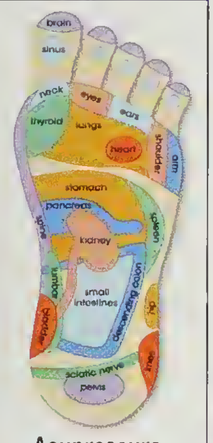
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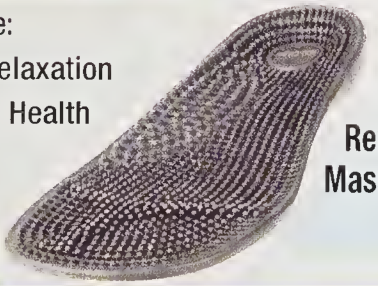

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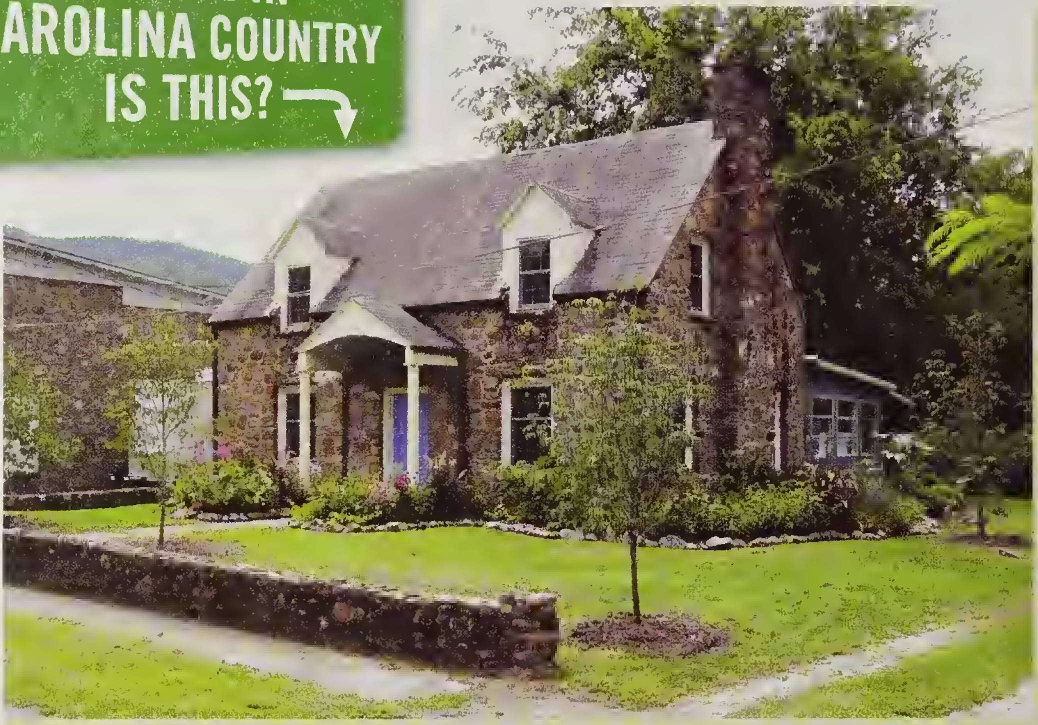

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by April 7 with your name, address and the name of your electric cooperative.

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Multiple entries from the same person will be disqualified.

The winner, chosen at random and announced in our May issue, will receive $25. To see the answer before you get your May magazine, go to "Where Is This?" on our website carolinacountry.com.

March winner

The picture in the March magazine, by Karen Olson House, shows the mailbox at Yates Food and Service Center on Hwy. 49 South in the Farmer community of Randolph County. The winning entry, chosen at random from all correct submissions, was from Brandon Jordan of Seagrove, a member of Randolph EMC.

March

CAROLINA COUNTRY scenes

Photo of the month

Muddy mug

This was our son's first mud bath. While my husband and I were building a barn, our two-year-old son was playing in mud puddles, going on wheelbarrow rides and eating hay. It took a month to get rid of all the mud on his boots and in my house!

Thea Gregory, Winnabow, Brunswick EMC

The Photo of the Month comes from those that scored an honorable mention from the judges in our 2014 photo contest ("Carolina Country Scenes," February 2014). See even more at the Photo of the Week on our website carolinacountry.com.

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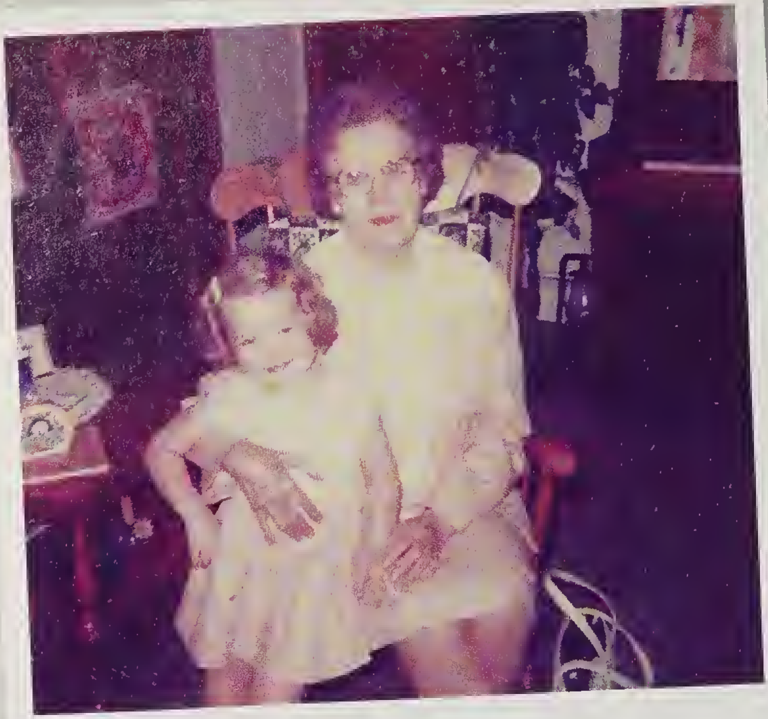


The dresses my grandmother and I wore in August 1985 were pink with white polka dots.

Grandmama's cross-stitch

My Grandmama, Myrtle Stallings Riddick, used to make matching dresses for herself and me when I was a little girl. I really liked matching her, and appreciated her taking the time to make them for us. She was the only grandparent I knew. We would see Grandmama often, either by visiting her in Hobbsville, N.C., or when she came to stay with us in Suffolk, Va.

She taught me how to cross-stitch. We would work on some projects together. She cross-stitched a tablecloth for each grandchild's wedding. Sadly, she was not alive when I, the last grandchild, got married in 2006. However, to my surprise, she had made one for me ahead of time before she died in 2001, at age 89. I think of her often and wish she could be here to see our growing family.

Carrie L. Blanchard Purser, Gates, Roanoke Electric

SEND US YOUR *Memories*

We'll pay $50 for those we publish in the magazine. We can put even more on our Internet sites, but can't pay for them. (If you don't want them on the Internet, let us know.)

Guidelines:

1. Approximately 200 words.
2. Digital photos must be at least 600kb or 1200 by 800 pixels.
3. No deadline, but only one entry per household per month.
4. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want yours returned.
5. We pay $50 for each one published in the magazine. We retain reprint rights.
6. Include your name, mailing address and the name of your electric cooperative.
7. **E-mail:** iremember@carolinacountry.com **Or by U.S. mail:** I Remember, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616

The Easter fawn

Living in the hills of West Virginia you see a lot of deer roaming around. One Easter morning I was driving with my little sister on the highway and noticed that someone swerved on the road to avoid hitting a fawn. So we pulled off on the side of the highway to check on the poor little animal only to find that its mother had already faced the terrible fate.

The fawn was crouched down in the grass, understandably scared. My sister and I approached with great caution so as not to scare him back into traffic. I crouched down and opened my arms to let him know that I was not going to harm him, and he walked right up to me and into my opened arms!

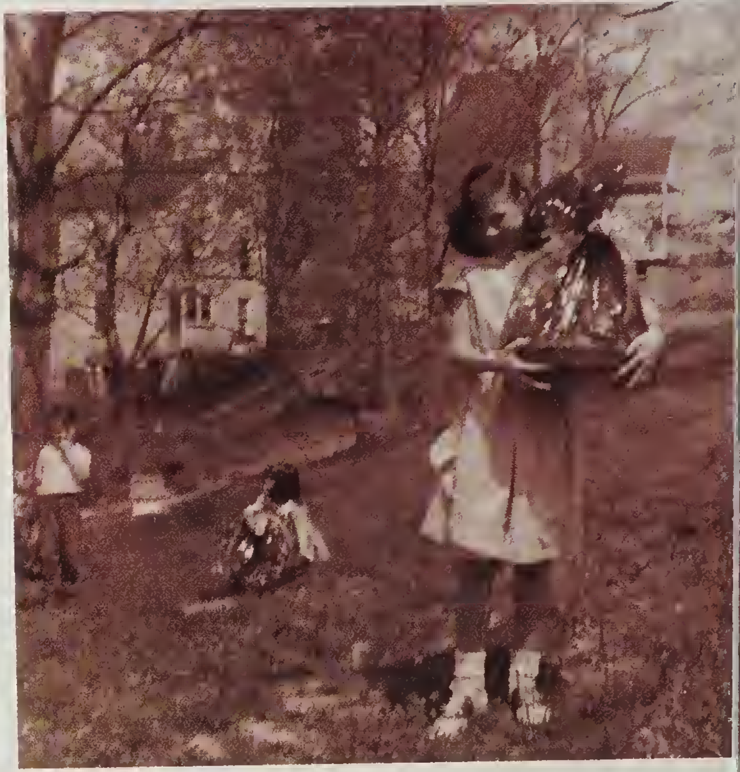
I picked up the motherless child and took him home so that I could care for him, waking up around-the-clock for feedings and playtime. My dachshund, Lillie, also helped to make him feel quite comfortable in his new home. My sister named him Bambi, and to this day our little buck still roams the mountain around our house and often returns for a little snack from his adopted family.

Candice Watts, Sunset Beach, Brunswick EMC

Caring people

This is a picture of my sister, my brother and me with Easter baskets that were given to us by our parents' friends. I guess they knew our parents couldn't afford to buy us such nice baskets. I'm the little girl sitting in the grass, and the basket is almost big as I am. Thank God for caring people.

Lori Barker, Asheboro, Randolph EMC



Three eggs in a sock

It was Easter 1952. I was 14 and my brother Charles was 6. He was in the first grade. Daddy and Mama had long gone to bed. When it was time for us to go to bed, Charles said, "Jewell, I forgot, but I'm supposed to take three colored boiled eggs to school in the morning."

I didn't know what to do. We were very poor, and I knew we didn't have any egg dye or food coloring. Then I remembered that I had a pair of red socks. I put the eggs inside the red socks and put them into a pot of water to boil. When they were done, I took them out and they were a pretty pink color.

Then Charles started to cry. "I don't want to take those eggs to school!" I asked why, and he said, "Because I might get them and I don't want them because you cooked them in your socks!"

"No," I told him. "The teacher will hide them for the whole class. Somebody else will find your eggs, and you will find someone else's."

The next morning, Charles had his little brown sack with his three pink eggs inside. That evening, Charles came home from school with a smile on his face. "Look, Jewell, at all the eggs I found." I peeked inside the little brown sack and there was not one pink egg in there.

Peggy Jewell Beasley, Laurel Hill,
Pee Dee EMC

Dressed-up bunnies

During the 1920s and 1930s, our mothers would make all of our dresses. The dry goods stores were many miles away. On Easter mornings when I would come down the stairs, in the parlor lined up on the sofa were all of my Easter bunnies dressed in colorful clothes. The front of the girls' lace dresses were smocked and the boys' coats and shirts closed with bright buttons. After the holiday, the bunnies were placed back in a trunk in the garret until the next year's Easter.

Elizabeth Richter, Lenoir, Blue Ridge EMC

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32	11.55	11.11	14.57	12.60	20.91	18.73
33	11.64	11.11	15.44	13.04	21.35	19.16
34	11.64	11.11	16.32	13.48	21.35	19.60
35	11.73	11.20	17.41	13.91	21.79	20.04
36	12.08	11.46	17.85	14.79	23.98	21.35
37	12.43	11.81	18.29	15.88	26.16	22.23
38	12.86	12.25	18.94	16.98	28.79	23.98
39	13.39	12.69	19.82	18.29	31.85	25.73
40	13.91	13.21	20.48	19.82	34.91	27.48
41	14.61	13.65	21.79	20.48	36.23	28.79
42	15.40	14.18	23.10	21.35	37.54	30.10
43	16.36	14.70	25.07	22.23	39.29	32.29
44	17.41	15.40	26.82	23.32	41.04	34.04
45	18.55	16.10	29.01	24.41	43.23	36.23
46	18.90	16.63	30.54	26.38	47.16	38.85
47	19.25	17.15	32.07	28.57	51.98	41.48
48	19.69	17.85	34.26	31.19	57.66	45.41
49	20.21	18.55	36.44	34.04	63.79	48.91

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50	20.74	19.34	38.85	37.32	70.35	53.29
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52	23.63	21.61	46.73	40.60	83.48	62.04
53	25.46	23.01	51.76	42.79	92.23	67.73
54	27.48	24.59	57.23	44.98	101.41	73.85
55	29.66	26.34	63.35	47.60	111.48	80.85
56	32.29	27.74	69.69	50.88	118.91	86.10
57	35.35	29.23	76.69	54.82	127.23	92.23
58	39.03	31.15	85.44	59.63	137.73	99.23
59	42.96	33.16	94.63	64.44	148.66	107.10
60	47.34	35.44	105.13	70.13	160.91	115.85
61	50.93	37.98	114.32	76.48	177.10	125.91
62	54.95	40.78	125.04	83.69	195.04	137.29
63	59.94	44.36	137.94	92.44	217.35	151.29
64	65.19	48.04	151.51	101.85	240.98	166.16
65	71.14	52.24	167.04	112.35	267.66	182.79
66	81.11	59.06	182.13	126.79	305.73	216.04
67	92.49	66.85	199.19	142.98	348.60	253.23
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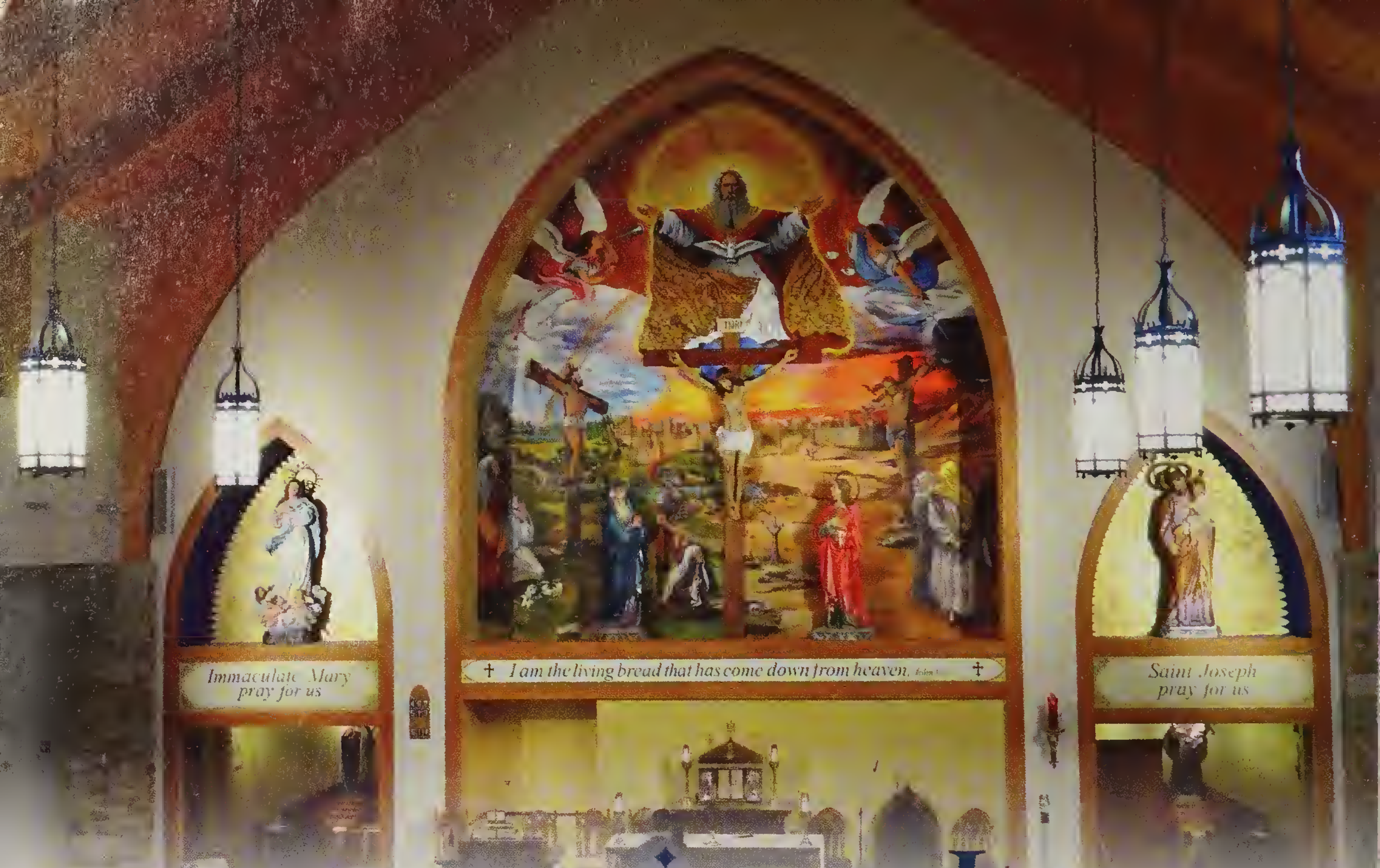

Immaculate Mary
pray for us
✝ I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. John
Saint Joseph
pray for us

MAJESTY

Art by Lisa Autry

As parishioners attend Easter season services this year at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Forest City, the Rev. Herbert Burke will be using a new and majestic teaching aid: a huge 20-foot by 21-foot mural set in the niche, on the altar, above the tabernacle.

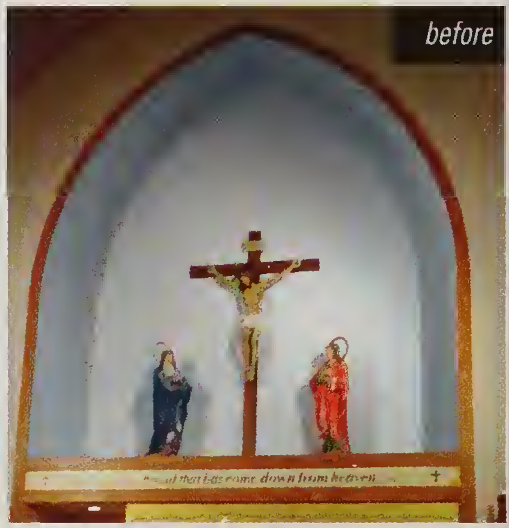
Dedicated in 2010, the Rutherford County church has displayed spiritual, inspirational art—both two dimensional and three dimensional—since the beginning. Everywhere you look inside the airy church you see artistic depictions of Bible stories.

The new, magnificent scene is the work of Concord-based artist Lisa Autry and her husband, Toby. While painting inside St. Ann Catholic Church in Charlotte, Lisa was introduced to Rev. Burke. Before long she embarked on an ambitious series for Immaculate Conception, culminating in the mural installed last February.

"The collaboration of Father Burke's ideas and my artistic experience allowed us to create this original mural," Lisa said. She initially drew the scenes on a 1-inch scale and later transferred them to a 1-foot scale on canvas in her Concord studio. After six months in the studio, they moved the canvases to Forest City and hung them on the prepared wall. Lisa then did final glazing and varnish.

A three-dimensional crucifix and statues stand before the mural to complete the tableaux.

"This mural tells many Christian stories that Father Burke is prepared to teach from," Lisa said.



For more information about Lisa Autry: lisaartist.com

Go to carolinacountry.com to see scenes of the project coming together, plus a video of other art inside Immaculate Conception Church.

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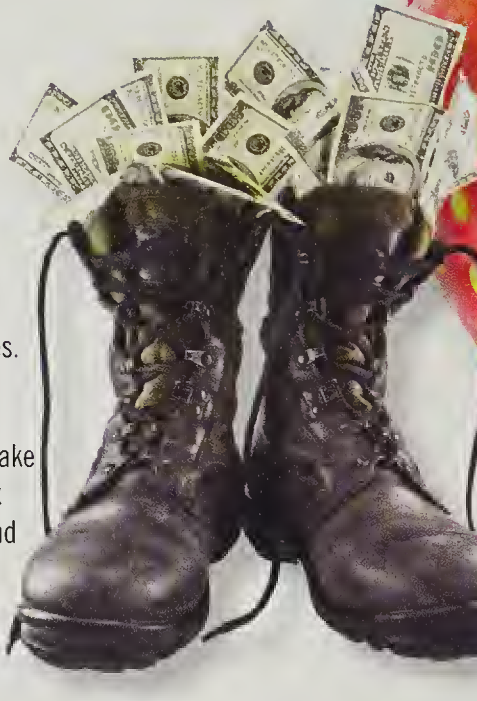

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ShoeBox Recycling

Do you know...

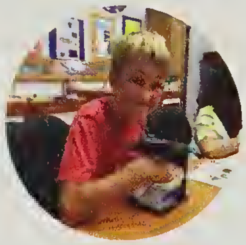
North Carolina is the fourth largest producer of strawberries in the U.S.? Soon you'll see these delicious, nutritious treats at farms and markets near you. The North Carolina Strawberry Association provides a free NCSA Farm Locator app for the iPhone (search iTunes). For other web-enabled mobile devices, ncstrawberrymobile.com/mobi offers farm locating features.

The group's website, ncstrawberry.com, has fun activities and easy recipes in its Kids section. (BTW: Try the "strawberry shortcake" recipes. They're really "strawberry shortcuts"—one uses cinnamon toast. Yum!)

tar heel lessons

a guide to NC for teachers and students

Bringing the sea to WNC



Photos by ECCO Team

It all started with Brenda Ramer's desire to teach ocean awareness to western North Carolina youth. Her taking 30 kids on a bus to see manatees in Florida in 2001 has quietly grown into a major marine education resource for mountain kids who otherwise would not get to see the sea.

Today, executive director Ramer reports that Team ECCO Ocean Center & Aquarium in Hendersonville houses more than 18 educational displays, with more than 75 species of marine and fresh water animals. Last year, it hosted more than 9,000 visitors and program participants.

The only student-driven center of its kind, Team ECCO's volunteers greet visitors, maintain aquariums and research species diversity. The Learning Lab for Youth is designated as a REEF Field Station for the study of ocean fish and invertebrates, and the center was set to open a 100-gallon touch tank on March 15, 2014. The center also offers ocean and earth studies programs done at the Center or at your site.

(828) 692-8386
teamecco.org

Note: Speaking of aquariums, Sea Life Aquarium, owned by Merlin Entertainments, opened late February at Concord Mills Mall near Charlotte. (866) 229-1573 or sealife.com/charlotte-concord

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RANK
FILE
LINE
ROW

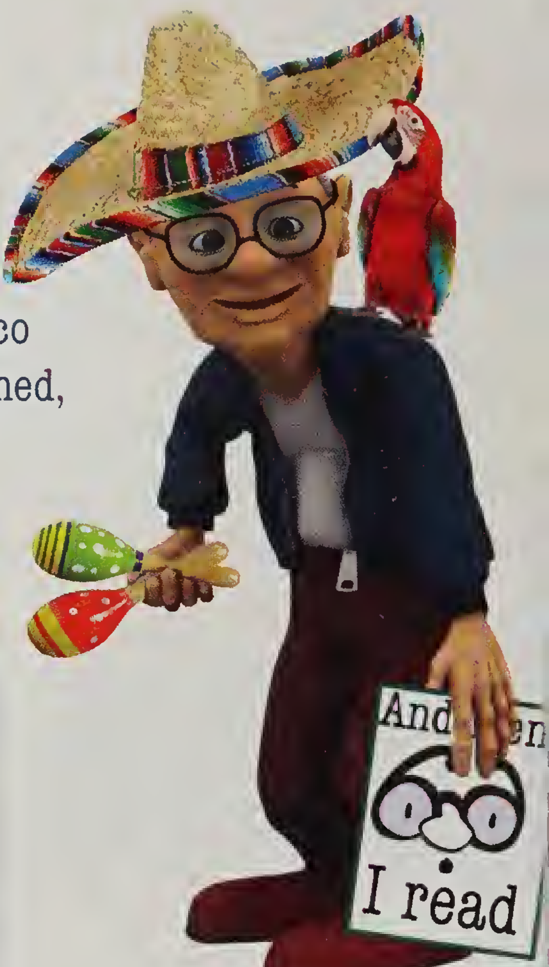
Here is a game that can be played on your computer screen, or you can print out a blank grid and use Scrabble tiles to slide around. The four words, RANK, FILE, LINE, and ROW can be rearranged within the grid in 24 different ways horizontally and another 24 ways vertically.

These can be done only if you transpose two identical letters, such as the I or L in FILE with the I or L in LINE, or the two R's, or the two N's! Solving all 48 variations is a lifetime project. But it can be done—I've done it!

For a list of all 48, send an e-mail to joyner@carolinacountry.com.

And then I read...

When a driver was stopped by police in Mexico City his pet parrot screamed, "He's drunk, he's drunk!" A test showed the bird was correct.



UNSCRAMBLIT

```
The pig limped after pulling
 A    _ A _ _ _ _ _ _ _
 s    r s b e d l a m c
```

Use the capital letters in the code key below to fill in the blanks above.

```
A G H I N M R S T   means
s c r a m b l e d
```

MATCHBOXES

Cy Nical says, "Drinking drivers..."

7	7
Q	Q

× 4 R

4	0	8
R	U	T

× 2 A

3	5	1	2	4
P	S	H	A	R

× 2 A

1	0	2
H	U	A

× 8 T

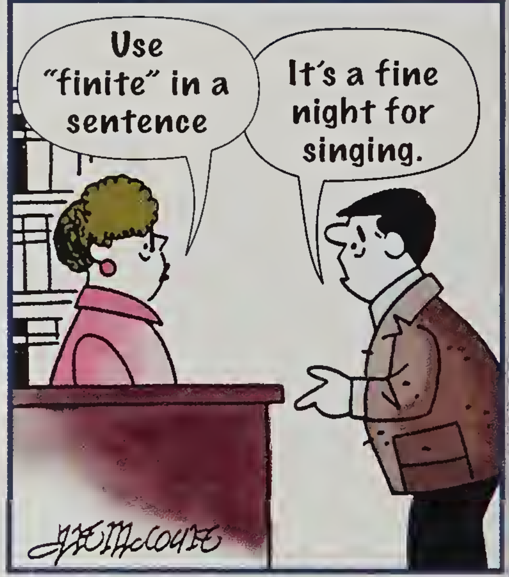
4	0	6	1	4
R	U	E	H	R

× 4 R

before

Solve these multiplication problems and write your answers in the box tops, one digit to each box. Then match boxes to find hidden words in your answers.

Oh, Henry!


Use "finite" in a sentence
It's a fine night for singing.

Cy Nical says,

"Alimony is usually paid with acrimony."

For answers, please see page 27

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By Hannah McKenzie

Range hoods: to vent or not to vent?

Q: I am remodeling my kitchen, and my contractor friend told me that all new homes have range hoods vented to the outside. Should I replace my recirculating range hood with one that is vented outside?

A: It depends. Installing a vented range hood should be a priority if you have a gas cooktop or oven. When in use, gas ranges exhaust water vapor and various gasses such as carbon monoxide. You don't want either lingering in your kitchen causing mold or making you feel sick.

If you have an electric range, a vented range hood is a terrific investment, but the decision to install one should be based on your cooking habits and remodeling budget. If most of your meals are cooked on the range and you often feel the need to open a window to remove a lingering aroma or steam build-up, a vented range hood would be a great investment for removing these from your home. I am grateful for my vented range hood when it removes steam on hot summer days and during culinary disasters like burnt cookies or a sweet potato pie overflowing in the oven.

Whether you own a gas or electric range, assess your current range hood by answering the following questions:

Does the range hood vent outside?

Range hoods are vented up through the roof or out through an exterior wall. Look for a metal duct going through the cabinets above or an exhaust cap on the exterior wall behind the range hood. You should feel air being blown out of the exhaust cap on the roof or wall when the fan is running.

Does the range hood suck enough air?

With the fan on, an 8 ½-by-11 sheet of paper or a page from Carolina Country magazine should easily be held against the fan filter by air suction. If the fan doesn't suck enough air, the problem could be solved by repairing the fan or improving the ductwork.

I am grateful for my vented range hood when it removes steam on hot summer days and during culinary disasters like burnt cookies or a sweet potato pie overflowing in the oven.

Can the existing range hood be vented?

Nearly all residential range hoods can be installed as recirculating or vented. Consult the installation instructions; or with the fan OFF, remove the filter and look for "knock-out" spots. These are rectangular or circular panels that can be removed to allow for a duct to be attached above or behind the hood.

If you are converting an existing recirculating range hood to be vented, the recirculating exhaust location will need to be closed. The location is typically at forehead height. Instead of air blowing out at your forehead, it needs to be sent through the newly installed vent to the outside.

If you are purchasing a new vented range hood, select a fan that is rated for pulling a minimum of 120 cubic feet per minute (CFM) and a maximum of 600 CFM. Too much ventilation from a residential range hood can cause problems, such as a gas fireplace backdrafting. Get product recommendations from friends and heed customer reviews. Microwaves are also available as vented range hoods.

Follow manufacturer's instructions for range hood installation, height and maintenance. Range hood ducts should be sheet metal and routed as short and straight as possible. Length and turns will limit the ability of the range hood to adequately pull air. Duct joints need to be properly sealed and the vent cap needs to open easily. Exhaust should never be ducted to an attic or crawlspace.

Improving a range hood is a great consideration during any kitchen remodel project.

Hannah McKenzie is a residential building science consultant for Advanced Energy in Raleigh.

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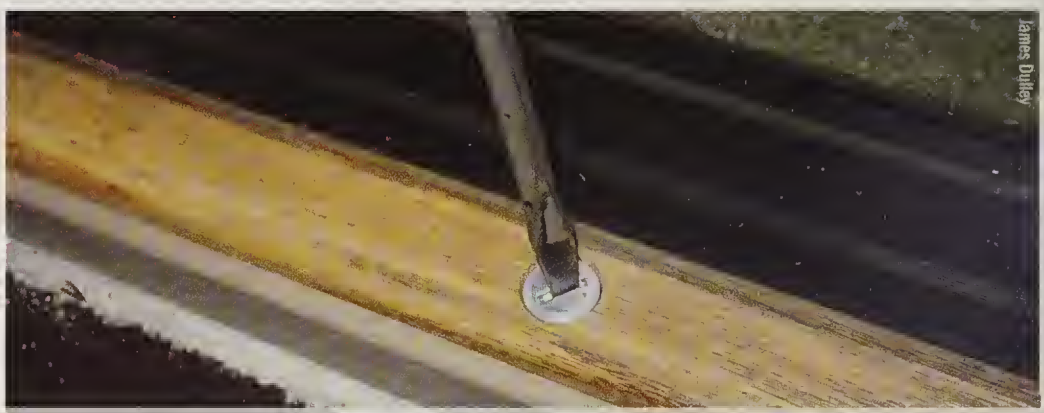
By James Dulley

Leaky doors

Fixing or replacing them can improve energy efficiency

Energy losses from inefficient front and back doors can account for a significant portion of your monthly utility bills. When leaky doors create drafts, people tend to set the thermostat higher. This wastes even more energy.

There are ways to improve the efficiency of old doors. But you should consider the possibility of installing new ones. The costs of some well-insulated steel and fiberglass doors, especially those for the back door without glass, are very reasonable.


James Dulley

The threshold under the door can be raised or lowered with a screwdriver so the door bottom weatherstripping seals tightly.

Inspect before deciding

Before making a decision, carefully inspect your old doors. If they are in very bad condition, it will be difficult to improve their efficiency by a meaningful amount. First, make sure a wood door is not rotting. Then place a long straight edge across the door to see if it is badly warped.

The most common problem with metal doors is rust, not warping. Check along the bottom by the weatherstripping on either side. Rainwater tends to collect there, and it is not always painted well.

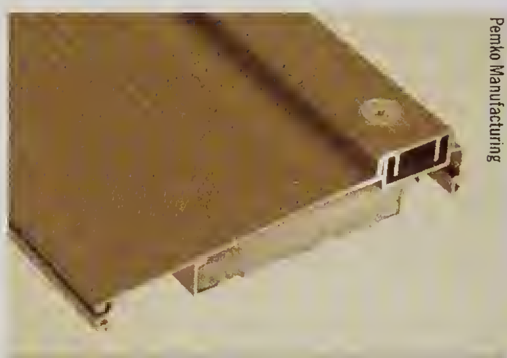
If you find small holes rusted through, they can be repaired with car body filler and then painted. First, try to determine the reason water is collecting there and correct the problem. Clean out as much rust as possible before filling.

If the doors are reasonably sound, check for air leaks. At night, have someone shine a flashlight from outdoors around the seals and check for light indoors. This will highlight significant leaks. Or carefully move a lighted match around the seals and watch for movement. Check the astragal on double doors. This is usually the raised half-round overlap where pairs of doors meet and acts as a seal between them.

Latch plates

Often with wood doors, especially ones with compression weatherstripping, the main problem is simply that the latch plate is not holding the door tightly closed against the weatherstripping.

One solution: reposition the latch plate. This will require filling in the old screw holes and drilling new ones. Chisel away some of the wood in the recess for the latch plate. Another option: install an adjustable latch plate. You may want to reposition it for summer and winter as the door and frame expand and contract from temperature and humidity.


Pemko Manufacturing

This replacement door threshold is made of all durable aluminum and can be adjusted up and down.

More solutions

Steel doors should feature magnetic weatherstripping, so this is not a major issue because the weatherstripping is drawn against the door edge. Just make sure the door's edge and its paint are clean and smooth, without gaps.

Check hinges and pins. If they are worn, the door will not seal properly. Take old ones to the store to match size. Don't just buy the cheapest ones, the quality varies.

It is almost certain the seal on the bottom of the doors against the floor threshold is worn. If it is not worn, adjust the floor threshold higher. There are several height adjustment screws across the threshold, but after years of use, they may be filled in with dirt. Poke around to find them. If the seal itself is bad, there are many generic replacement seals you can install.

Another option is an add-on retractable threshold seal, effective if carpeting is on the floor by the door. The threshold seal is mounted on the inside surface of the lower door edge. When the door starts to open, a pin against the door frame is released and the seal automatically lifts to clear the carpeting. It is easy to install and adjust.

Jim Dulley is an engineer and a columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Send inquiries to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit dulley.com.

The following companies offer door improvement products:

Duck Brand (800) 321-0253
duckbrand.com

M-D Building Products (800) 654-8454
mdteam.com

Pemko Manufacturing (800) 283-9988
pemko.com

Thermwell (800) 526-5265
frostking.com

Vehicle necessities

Cover unexpected occurrences with these important kits

By Amy Higgins

With travel, come surprises. Many times they are pleasant and fun surprises, but, occasionally, not so much. It's a good idea at any time to have these items in your car, SUV, van or truck, but especially to have them on a road trip.

First aid

Keeping a first-aid kit in your vehicle helps you handle burns, falls and illnesses. Your first-aid kit should be readily accessible. Don't pack it under your luggage.

The American Red Cross recommends a family of four have these items in a first-aid kit:

- Two absorbent compress dressings, 5-by-9 inches
- 25 adhesive bandages, assorted sizes
- One adhesive cloth tape, 10-yards long, 1-inch wide
- Five antibiotic ointment packets
- Five antiseptic wipe packets
- Two packets of aspirin (81 milligrams each)
- One blanket
- One breathing barrier with one-way valve
- One instant cold compress
- Two pair of non-latex gloves, large
- Two hydrocortisone ointment packets
- Scissors
- One roller bandage, 3 inches wide
- One roller bandage, 4 inches wide
- Five sterile gauze pads, 3-by-3 inches
- Five sterile gauze pads, 4-by-4 inches
- Oral thermometer, non-mercury/nonglass
- Two triangular bandages
- Tweezers
- First-aid instruction booklet
- Insect repellent
- Hand sanitizer
- Cotton swabs

A fun box

It's also a good idea to have items on hand to keep your family occupied in case you are stranded for a long period of time. Create a special box of entertainment items such as books, card games, and a pencil and notebook.

Car or truck emergencies

If your vehicle breaks down or gets stuck in mud, this kit can help get your car or truck moving again. Also, it's good to have it in case you have to evacuate your home due to severe weather.

The American Red Cross suggests you pack your emergency car kit with these items:

- Battery powered radio, flashlight and extra batteries
- Cell phone
- Blanket
- Booster cables
- Fire extinguisher, 5-pound, A-B-C type
- Bottled water and non-perishable, high-energy foods such as granola bars, raisins and peanut butter
- Map (even if you have a GPS)
- Shovel
- Flares
- Tire repair kit and pump
- Matches and survival candle that can burn for several hours

There are other factors to consider. For example, if you're stuck for a long time, you will need to go to the bathroom. Go above and beyond and add these items, suggested by Allstate insurance, to your first-aid kit:

- Toilet paper
- Trash bags
- Baby wipes
- Bar of soap
- Disinfecting wipes
- Feminine protection
- Zip-top bags in various sizes
- Water
- LED flashlights and/or headlamps
- Rain ponchos
- Tarp
- Multi-purpose knife
- Sunblock
- Whistle
- Pepper spray

Amy Higgins writes for Colorado Country Life magazine and lives in Centennial, Colo.

Thwarting thieves

Steps to take before hitting the road

By Amy Higgins

Vacations are a time to relax and have fun, but becoming a victim of theft can spoil those plans. Don't be an easy mark: safeguard your vehicle, identity and home while traveling.

Auto theft

Did you know auto theft peaks in the summer months? According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), most vehicle thefts occur in July and August. Your vehicle is usually close by when you're on a road trip, but think of how often your vehicle is unattended: stops at rest areas, convenience stores, historical sites or amusement parks.

And often your car is full of luggage and other personal belongings that can lure thieves. Troy Sandberg, owner of Signal 88 Security in Denver, Colo., has these tips to avoid vehicle theft:

- Park in well-lit areas and keep your windows rolled up and doors locked at all times when unattended. If you have an alarm system, use it.
- If you leave town without your vehicle, inform trusted neighbors or property management and ask them to report suspicious activity around your home and vehicle.
- Never leave your keys in your vehicle.

Home theft

Every 10 seconds an American home is burglarized, according to Farmers Insurance. And you don't need to be wealthy to tempt thieves. Sure, homes with high-tech electronics and jewelry are targets, but common conveniences such as TVs, computers and cameras can lure in robbers.

Don't alert potential thieves of your absence. Farmers Insurance suggests these precautions:

- Make sure mail and newspapers are either picked up or suspend their delivery.
- Arrange to have your lawn mowed or snow shoveled.
- Ask a neighbor to park a car in your driveway.
- Put lights, TV and stereo on timers that turn on and off randomly.
- Don't advertise your absence with announcements on your voicemail, email, Facebook page or Twitter account.
- Turn your telephone ringer down or off.
- Install a motion detector on outside lights.

Do not leave expensive items in your car in plain view.

Identity theft

More than ever, identity theft is a great concern. According to the Javelin Strategy & Research 2013 Identity Fraud Report, identity fraud affected 12.6 million consumers in 2012.

Becoming a victim of identity theft while on vacation, especially far from home, can be traumatic. Kiplinger has these suggestions to safeguard your identity:

- Inform your credit card company of your travels, especially if you'll be out of the country. Financial institutions are cracking down on unusual spending behaviors, and your account could be frozen if they identify spending activity outside your normal region.
- If you receive an alert about suspicious activity on your cell phone, don't call the number provided or reply by text. This has become a common practice for thieves. Instead, call the number on the back of your credit card.
- Rid your wallet of unneeded credit cards or other personal information, such as your Social Security card, and store them in a secure location. Only keep items you will need on vacation in your wallet and make copies of those items in the event your wallet is stolen.
- Keep your hotel room clear of personal information when not there. It can get stolen while you're away from your room.
- Check your bank accounts and credit card activity regularly.

Amy Higgins writes for Colorado Country Life magazine.

Cool tools

Gadgets can make your trip more enjoyable

By Amy Higgins

Destination known or unknown, there's an inherent feeling of freedom driving off into the big blue yonder. No long-term parking fees, airport security checks or missed connecting flights.

This year, plan wisely and conquer the open road. These gadgets just might be a key element to a triumphant road trip.

Safety first

At any given moment, you can get a flat or need a jumpstart. The **600 PEAK Amp Jump-Starter** with Inflator offers peace of mind. It lets you jump-start your own car and pump your tires, relieving you of the burden of finding a person or place to get assistance. This product has an alarm and light that will warn you if you hook up the jumper cables incorrectly. It also comes with a digital LED display that shows your tires' PSI, a built-in AC charger, a 12-volt outlet and a 1-amp USB port. You can purchase a jump starter with inflator with more juice, but expect to pay more. This particular model costs around $60 and is available at most major car service centers. (For more tips on emergency car items, see page 29.)

The art of organization

Staying organized may not be your strong suit, but there are handy products that can help you get there. For example, **GRID-IT!** uses a system of rubberized elastic bands and zippered pockets that hold your personal items firmly in place. From cell phones and cords to hairbrushes and breath mints, the organizers keep important items secure and make it easier to locate belongings when they're needed. GRID-IT! organizers range from very small to very large and come in a variety of colors such as black, gray, blue and red. Prices range from $9.99 to $49.99. cocooninnovations.com

Rooftop storage

When road tripping, sometimes there seems to be more luggage than your car can handle. Most roof racks on the market are expensive, bulky and difficult to use. That's not the case with the **HandiRack rooftop storage system**. To use, place the un-inflated HandiRack on your vehicle's rooftop, pass the strap through the open doors and clamp the strap to the heavy duty buckle on the other side. Next, close the doors, inflate the rack with the double-action HandiPump (included with the rack) and strap on your luggage. When you're done, release the buckle, deflate the rack, fold and pack it away in the drawstring travel bag. The HandiRack can hold up to 175 pounds, is completely portable and fits most cars. It starts around $85. handiworld.com

Comfort is critical

Long road trips can do a number on your back. Tempur-Pedic has a solution: the **LumbarCushion-Travel**. Designed specifically for those who sit for a long period of time, the LumbarCushion's ergonomic design helps support the back, making your trip more pleasurable. The LumbarCushion-Travel costs $59. (888) 811-5053 or tempurpedic.com

Safe headphones

When your kids listen to their favorite music and audiobooks, you don't want them to damage their eardrums. The volume control in **Kidz Gear Safe Headphones** doesn't exceed 90 decibels, a level that researchers have determined safe. Kidz Gear Safe Headphones come in gray, blue, orange, purple, green, pink and white, and cost $19.99. (800) 828-4514 or familysafemedia.com

Amy Higgins writes for Colorado Country Life magazine and lives in Centennial, Colo.

cocoon
GRID-IT!
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***Top:** GRID-IT! uses a system of rubberized elastic bands and zippered pockets that hold your personal items firmly in place.*

***Middle:** The volume control in Kidz Gear Safe Headphones doesn't exceed 90 decibels, a level that researchers have determined safe.*

***Bottom:** Most roof racks on the market are expensive, bulky and difficult to use. That's not the case with the HandiRack rooftop storage system.*

Geocaching hunts

Family friendly sleuthing makes vacations more exciting

By Amy Higgins

Geocaching.com

Traditional road trip activities like the license plate game can be fun, but perhaps you are up for a new game. Try geocaching. It's a way to build some adventure and get a little exercise during your next road trip.

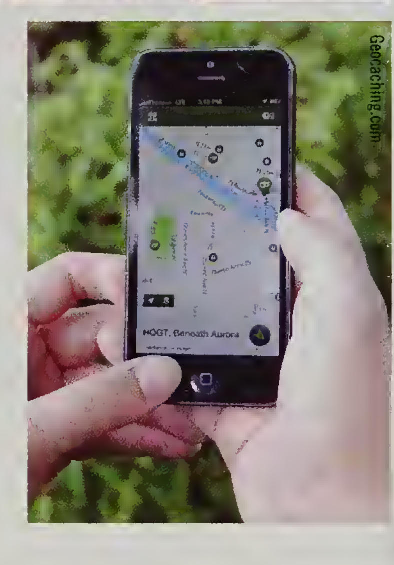
This scavenger hunt can be played within feet of your home, near the attraction you are visiting or in the middle of nowhere. No matter where you are, it's practically guaranteed a geocaching treasure is nearby. And who doesn't like a little treasure sometimes?

Rewarding detours

Geocaching uses GPS devices to locate the coordinates to a specific treasure, or geocache. You'll need a GPS device or a GPS-enabled mobile phone to navigate to the cache, and a Geocaching.com membership. You can register for a free basic membership on Geocaching.com, locate the "Hide & Seek a Cache" page, enter the postal code, state or approximate address of your location or destination and click on any geocache in the list provided.

Lists are sizable and geocaches range in difficulty (marked as such) and terrain. Once you decide which geocache sounds the most enticing, enter the coordinates in your GPS device and follow the clues. Find out if the geocache's description offers additional hints, such as a decryption, as these hints can be critical to finding the cache. And pack a pencil and notebook for the road.

> Some caches contain treasures. If you choose to take one, replace the treasure with another of equal value!



Geocaching.com

Free app

Smartphone users can install the free "Geocaching Intro" app that accomplishes the same goals as the website but its portability comes in handy, especially when you need to look up a tip or move to a different cache.

Many kinds to choose

Geocaches come in many forms: plastic containers, boxes, bags, fake rocks and logs, tools, nuts and bolts, and magnetic containers. When you find the geocache, open it, check out the contents, sign the logbook and take a picture as a souvenir. Some caches contain treasures. If you choose to take one, it is expected that you replace the treasure with another of equal value. When your mission is complete, it's important to return the cache to its original spot so others can enjoy it. As you improve, challenge yourself to the more difficult hunts. Or, relocate or create a geocaching trackable, a traveling game piece. Common types of trackables include Travel Bug Trackables and Geocoins.

Amy Higgins, a writer with Colorado Country Life magazine, enjoys geocaching with her son, Jack, 7.

N.C. cache treasure is everywhere

Putting in "North Carolina" recently as a statewide area for caches on Geocaching.com brought up more than 24,860 caches!

Putting in the zip code for the North Carolina Zoo with a designation of a 25-mile radius brought up more than 1,882 caches. Lest you think there aren't so many in a more rural area, think again! Checking on the mountain town of Sparta revealed more than 350 caches within 25 miles.

Click "Hide & Seek a Cache" under "Play" on the menu bar, enter the address or zip code of your location and see all that's waiting for you to discover.

The North Carolina Geocachers Organization (NCGO) maintains a Greatest Hits list of notable caches in the state. Check it out on the group's website, ncgeocachers.org.

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Carolina Country Adventures

6 guides to North Carolina experiences you won't forget

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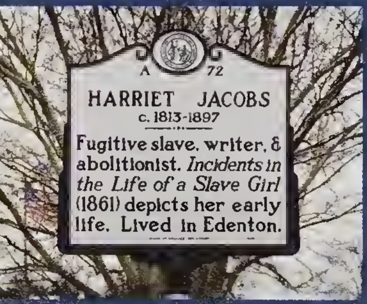
Our annual Touchstone Energy Travel Guide encourages you to experience this variety firsthand.

This year, we offer you six guides to Carolina Country Adventures. Learn about our aviation history, famous North Carolinians, animal parks, African-American heritage, new state parks, and birds that fly everywhere. The adventures may be familiar to you, or they may not. In any case, each holds the promise for a lot of travel fun.

As you make your way through this guide and through the countryside, you can be assured that a Touchstone Energy cooperative is nearby.

Thanks to everyone who helped us compile this guide, and to our sponsors: the cooperatives and the advertisers on pages 36 to 41.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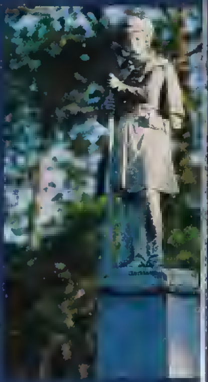

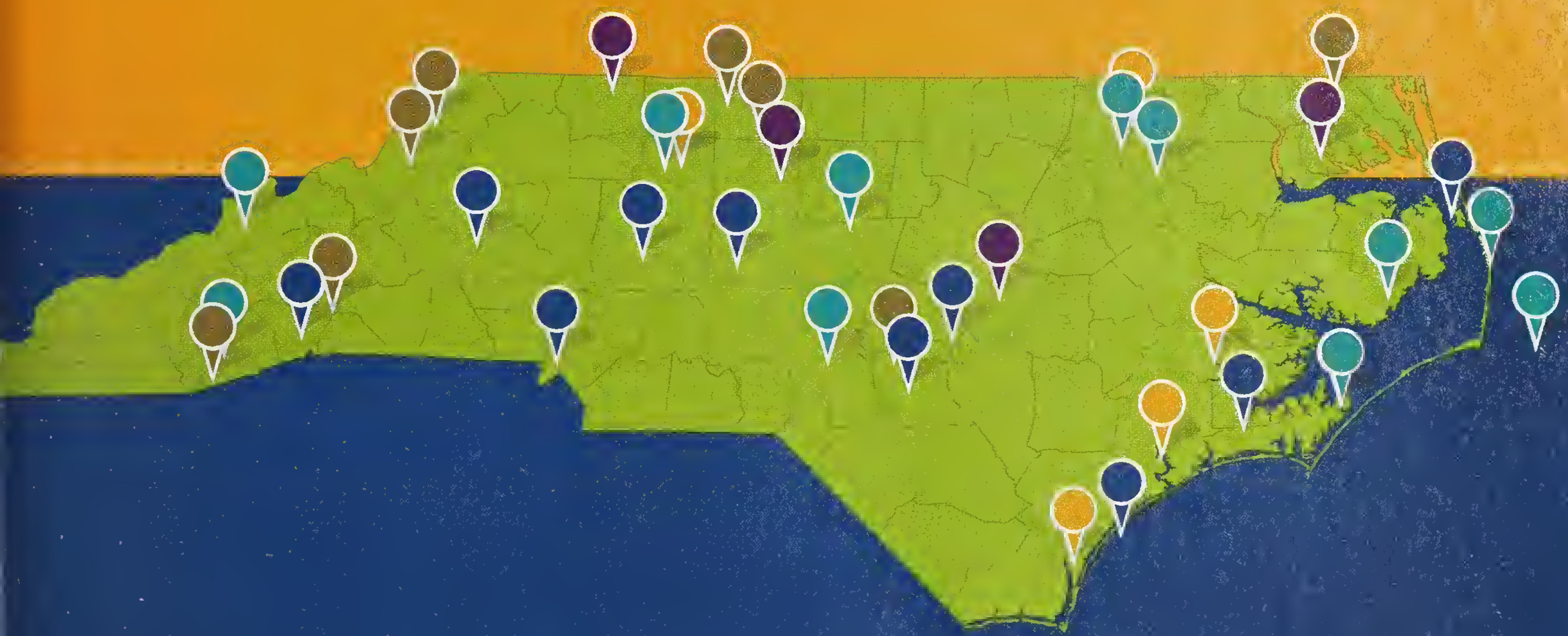

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Where the wild things are

Get up close to animals in the Piedmont and the mountains

Whether it's finned, feathered or furry, animal lovers in North Carolina can flock to enjoy a wide variety of wild animals, many of them within a few hours' drive in the Piedmont and Mountain regions.

Lazy 5 Ranch

Get nose to snout with more than 700 animals roaming free at the Lazy 5 Ranch in Mooresville.

1 Lazy 5 Ranch

15100 Mooresville Road, Mooresville

"Please feed the animals!" At least that's what they seem to be saying when they poke their heads in your car window to see what's for lunch. This 3.5-mile drive-through tour through gently rolling pasture lands is home to more than 750 animals from around the world, most of them roaming free for your enjoyment at this privately owned animal haven.

Drive through on your own, or call ahead to reserve a seat on the horse-drawn wagon tour, a family and group favorite. The park is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. until one hour before sunset, and on Sundays from 1 p.m. until one hour before sunset.

Admission costs vary for individuals and groups, and the wagon ride is a few dollars more per person. Lazy 5 Ranch does not accept credit or debit cards. To learn more, visit the website at lazy5ranch.com.

2 Tiger World

4400 Cook Road, Rockwell

Yipes! Stripes! If your taste in animals is more exotic, consider this carnivore haven just 15 minutes off I-85 and Lowes Motor Speedway in Rockwell. This conservation and educational facility is dedicated solely to rescue, rehabilitation, and preservation for tigers, lions, grizzly bears, wolves, leopards and monkeys.

You will see the animals in natural settings and have the opportunity to observe them running, playing, swimming, eating, sleeping and interacting with their handlers.

Take a self-guided tour or schedule ahead for an educational tour led by an animal handler. Tiger World is like a natural wilderness hike with pathways of rock and grass, so consider this when bringing strollers or wheelchairs.

The park is open every day from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. except Wednesdays. For specifics on admission pricing and special tours, visit the website at tigerworld.us or call (704) 279-6363.

3 Western North Carolina Nature Center

75 Gashes Creek Road, Asheville

It isn't often you see elusive white-tailed deer, black bears, playful river otters, cougars and endangered red wolves up close and personal. At the WNC Nature Center, you can observe more than 60 species of animals native to the Southern Appalachians. The park features paved sidewalks and well-groomed trails of native plants with many animals in a natural habitat, all on the banks of the Swannanoa River.

In the North Carolina Farm area, the park also features a variety of domesticated animals such as Cotswold sheep, chickens, rabbits, donkeys and goats.

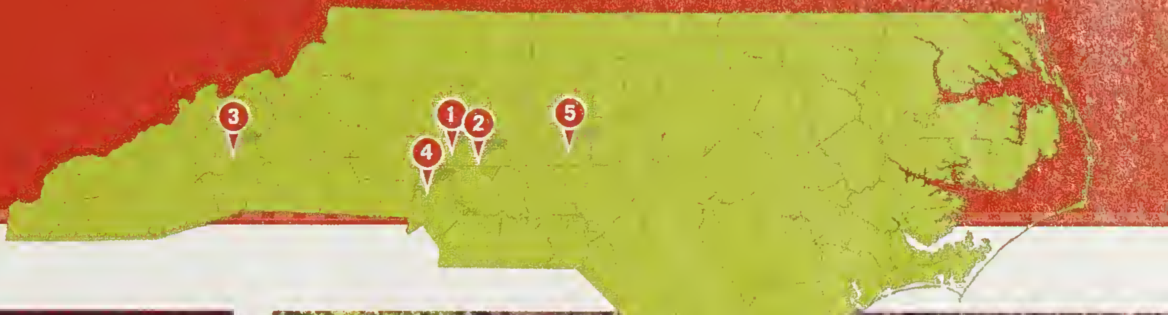
New this season is the armadillo exhibit, a species that is starting to make its home in western North Carolina. Also new are the improved viewing areas for the red wolves, and the addition of more, younger farm animals in the petting area.

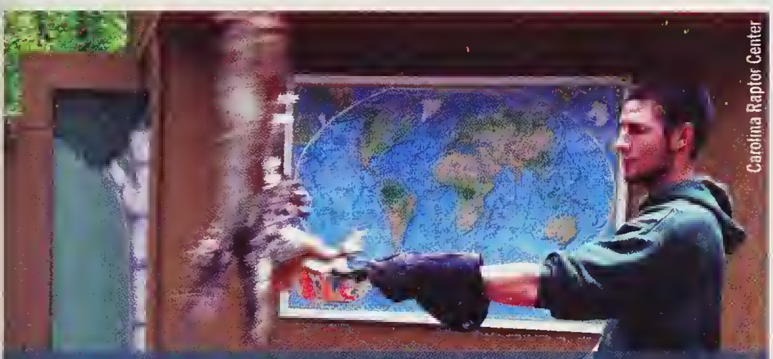
This 40-acre educational gem is just within the city limits of beautiful Asheville, a quick exit off I-40 near the Blue Ridge Parkway, and welcomes more than 100,000 visitors annually. Bring a family picnic lunch to share. The center is open daily.

For more information and to plan your trip, visit the website at wncnaturecenter.com.

This tiger trio rests easy along with other exotic species at Tiger Wo

By Carole Howell





At The Carolina Raptor Center, visitors can observe birds in flight and learn more about conserving these amazing birds of prey.

④ Carolina Raptor Center

6000 Sample Road, Huntersville

Don't let their size and sharp talons scare you away. These magnificent birds of prey will delight and engage kids 2–92. The staff and volunteers at Carolina Raptor Center connect humans with birds for education and conservation. It's one of the only facilities in the region that provides medical care, display and education about these interesting and sometimes endangered creatures, both native and exotic.

Along with the more than 25 species of birds, you can enjoy an interactive raptor trail and spend the day hiking or picnicking in the nature preserve. The Owl Forest: A Nature Notebook encourages you to observe seven species of owl and participate in creative hands-on education activities. The latest addition is Vulture Culture, an exhibit that examines these very intelligent scavengers.

Saturdays and Sundays feature programs where you may go behind the scenes of the raptor hospital, take a trail trivia tour, meet the keepers, and enjoy the Talons: Birds of the World flight show featuring birds in free flight in the center's 85-seat amphitheatre.

Summer visiting hours are Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sunday from noon–5 p.m. Programming varies by season, so visit the center's website at carolinaraptorcenter.org to find out what's happening.

Tiger World

N.C. Zoo photo

Zoo educator Jessica Hoffmire, right, shows young zoo visitors the small wonders of the kidZone pond.

⑤ North Carolina Zoo

4401 Zoo Parkway, Asheboro

North Carolina's own natural habitat zoo is a must-see for animal lovers of every age. Where else in North Carolina can you see polar bears, for example, or a ring-tailed lemur?

Located within an easy drive of Raleigh, Greensboro and Charlotte, the North Carolina Zoo is the nation's largest walk-through-natural-habit zoo, featuring more than 1,600 animals from two continents and 52,000 plants along five miles of shaded walkways.

New this year is the completely renovated kidZone, an area where children can explore nature using a variety of hands-on activities.

Besides the variety of live animals, visitors can enjoy Art in the Park, an exhibit of animal-inspired art created by professional artists. The works emulate nature's diversity and invite viewers to consider the complex relationship between nature and humans.

Special events include the Earth Day Celebration in April, "Migratory Bird Day" in May, and the popular "Boo at the Zoo" Halloween festival in October.

Wear comfortable walking shoes, and don't forget your camera for a daylong learning adventure.

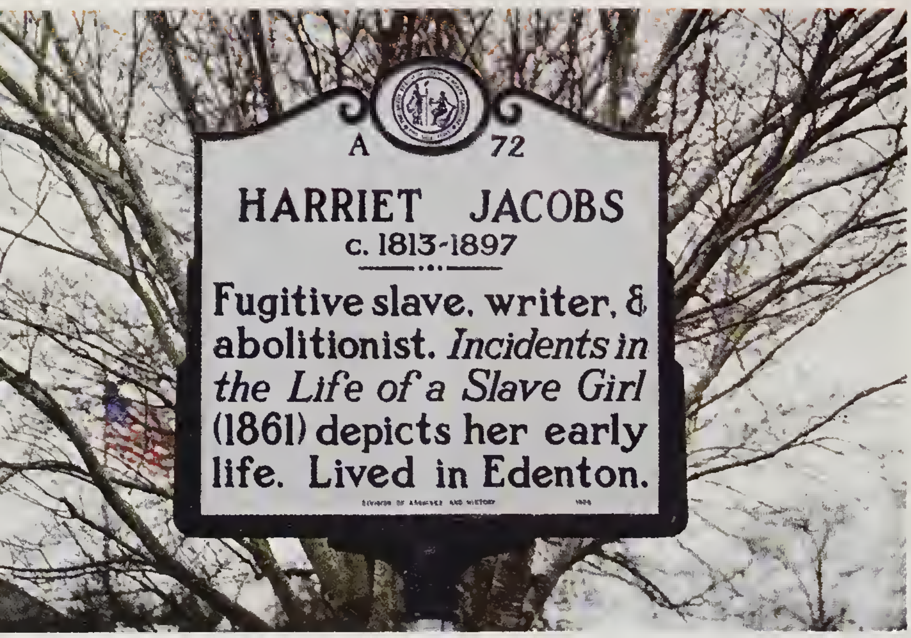
The zoo is open from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. from April through October and from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. from November through March. Visit nczoo.org to plan your visit.

Carole Howell is a freelance writer and animal lover in Lincolnton. Find her at walkerbranchwrites.com.

From Ye Ole Goat Farm in Murphy to Okracoke's Banker Ponies, North Carolina is alive with animal venues. For a full listing of the state's zoos and aquarium attractions large and small, go to visitnc.com/zoos-aquariums, and explore what's in your area.

Heritage with a heart

New trails link African-American history and culture


A 72
HARRIET JACOBS
c. 1813-1897
Fugitive slave, writer, & abolitionist. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861) depicts her early life. Lived in Edenton.

New and relatively new African-American heritage trails are making history come alive by linking North Carolina places to historic contributions and pivotal events. Taking these journeys reveals courageous, often unsung heroes with extraordinary stories from nearly forgotten history.

1 Jacksonville/Onslow African-American Heritage Trail

The Jacksonville/Onslow trail commands attention for stories that illuminate segregation in the mid-20th century. The Montford Point Marine Museum preserves the legacy of the first African-American Marines, who fought bigotry as well as foreign enemies during World War II.

Hammocks Beach, another major site, glimpses the history of segregated beaches. Its illustrious history led to the creation of a state park for African-Americans, a designation that ended with the Civil Rights Act.

Find out more via the digital guide at www.aaht.netbookhost.com or online at onlyinonslow.com or call (800) 932-2144.

2 Halifax Maritime Underground Railroad

Before the Civil War, Halifax was a beacon for freedom seekers. A substantial population of free blacks and enslaved artisans and proximity to an active Quaker population made Halifax a desirable destination for runaway slaves. The Roanoke River's docks, taverns and print shops served as critical sources of information for runaways.

Find out more at www.nchistoricsites.org/halifax/AfricanAms.htm.

3 Trail of Flames, New Bern

The Great Fire of 1922 destroyed 40 city blocks in New Bern and left one-third of the population — most of them African-American — homeless. A new trail recounts the fateful day and also connects it to the development of today's New Bern. It includes The Charlotte S. Rhone Cultural Center, named after one of the first black women to be registered as a nurse in North Carolina, and the Cedar Grove Cemetery, which became an overnight refuge for black families fleeing the fire. People camped out among tombstones with whatever possessions they were able to salvage, including several prized pianos.

Find out more at trailofflames.org. For a guided tour, call (252) 288-5716.

While in New Bern, explore other dimensions of African-American history through a self-guided walking tour and the Tryon Palace complex (choose the African-American viewpoint on the hand-held History Navigator).

Learn more at VisitNewBern.com.

4 Wilmington's African-American Heritage

Wilmington's new guide highlights 37 important sites with photos, descriptive text and a walking map. It relates sites to dramatic events such as the escape of 22 slaves from the Orange Street Landing and the Riot of 1898 as well as illuminates the architectural artistry seen at Thalian Hall and influential people such as artist Minnie Evans and Dr. Hubert Eaton, a physician who assisted athlete Althea Gibson on her way to tennis stardom.

Find the guide at wilmingtonandbeaches.com.

OCEAN CITY
TERRACE

Onslow County Tourism

Ocean City Terrace, 1953, Topsail Island, Onslow County

> *"No man can know where he is going unless he knows exactly where he has been and exactly how he arrived at his present place."*
>
> *—Writer Maya Angelou*

5 Winston-Salem Art & Culture Guide

Freed and enslaved African-Americans have been part of Winston-Salem's story since the Moravians first settled here in the 18th century. The new guide links that history into today's vibrant arts and cultural life in Winston-Salem. Points of interest include Old Salem, a 21-block community which preserves St. Philips Moravian Church (dating to 1861) and the reconstructed 1823 log church while acknowledging how segregationist sentiment chipped away at egalitarian Moravian ideals.

The guide incorporates the African-American presence at Reynolda House Museum of American Art and discusses other attractions as well as shops and restaurants of interest.

Access the digital guide or request a print copy at VisitWinstonSalem.com.

Additional trails

These trails join older ones such as Durham's African-American Heritage Guide (durham-nc.com) and Fayetteville's African-American Cultural Heritage Trail (visitfayettevillenc.com), and the Underground Railroad sites that follow.

National Underground Railroad Network sites

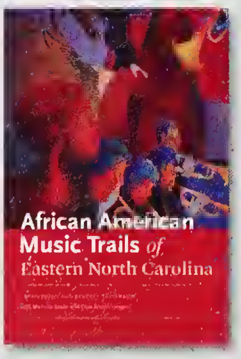
Moving eastward to the Inner Banks, there are Underground Railroad sites such as Roanoke Island's Freedom Trail and the Harriet Jacobs Tour in Edenton. You'll find a Freedom Seekers tour at discoverelizabethcity.com. (Click on Things To Do, then Civil War Trails.) Jacobs was an escaped slave and abolitionist who hid in an attic space for seven years. Copies of her powerful book, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl," are available at the Historic Edenton State Historic Site Visitor Center, along with a self-guided tour brochure.

For more, go to visitedenton.com or call (800) 775-0111.

Information for this article and sidebar was provided by the North Carolina Division of Tourism, with information also added by Carolina Country contributing editor Karen Olson House.

Onslow County Tourism

Marine platoon training at Montford Point Camp in Jacksonville.



Music trails in eastern N.C.

The newest culture trail from the North Carolina Arts Council springs from the rich sounds rooted in eight counties east of Raleigh. Jazz, blues, R&B, funk, gospel and hip-hop ring out on the 17-track CD that accompanies a new book, "African American Music Trails of Eastern North Carolina." The travel guide journeys to music venues, events and museums to illuminate the musicians' lives and reveal the deep ties between music and community.

Interviews with more than 90 artists reveal a world of music, especially jazz, rhythm and blues, funk, gospel and church music, blues, rap, marching band music and beach music. Late great artists such as Thelonius Monk and Dr. Billy Taylor as well as modern musicians link past and present with amazing stories. New and historical photographs enliven the narrative, and maps and travel information for the counties of Edgecombe, Greene, Jones, Wayne, Lenoir, Nash, Pitt and Wilson help you plan your trips.

The best starting points are the website page (ncarts.org/experience-the-arts) and the book, written by Sarah Bryan and Beverly Patterson with Michelle Lanier. Published by UNC Press, it can be ordered at uncpress.unc.edu or by calling (800) 848-6224.

Fly zones

Aviation enthusiasts will find lots to explore in North Carolina

US AIRWAYS
FLIGHT 1549
MIRACLE ON THE HUDSON

Lowell Warner

A recent addition to the Carolinas Aviation Museum is the "Miracle on the Hudson" airliner piloted by "Sully" Sullenberger in 2009.

More than a century ago, two brothers from Dayton, Ohio, made history here that would forever change the world. From atop 90-foot Big Kill Devil Hill at Wright Brothers National Memorial, you can see where Orville and Wilbur Wright's plane left the ground for 12 seconds — the first controlled, powered airplane flight.

This is, of course, the pinnacle of aviation history in North Carolina and the world; the beginning. But the Wright Memorial is in no way the only aviation-related attraction in North Carolina. Across the state are museums honoring the men and women who built upon what the Wright Brothers proved was a possibility that winter day not so long ago.

1 General William C. Lee House

209 W. Divine Street, Dunn

Major Gen. William C. Lee's legacy should be another point of pride for North Carolinians. "Father of the US Army Airborne," Lee helped develop what would become an intricate part of America's military might. The house helps voice Lee's story by illustrating his personal life as well as the early years of the airborne.

After World War I, Lee was assigned as a peace-time observer in Germany where he began taking note of Hitler's airborne troop development. When he returned to Washington, he talked incessantly about the need for the United States to have an airborne unit. When President Franklin Roosevelt's military aide wanted to know about developing airborne warfare, it was Lee who became the point man. He was invited to the White House to brief President Roosevelt on what he had seen in Germany. The President was so impressed that he ordered airborne planning and training to begin immediately.

By touring the house, guests get a feel for the man and his mission, and learn from its many airborne exhibits.

(910) 892-1947 or generalleeairbornemuseum.org

2 Airborne & Special Operations Museum

100 Bragg Boulevard, Fayetteville

In the main gallery, exhibits begin with the U.S. Army Parachute Test Platoon. The gallery continues through World War II, which was fought on many fronts. Uniforms, medals, personal and regimental stories play out through this time tunnel.

Continuing through the Cold War, Korean War, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War, life-size dioramas, special sound effects and meticulously thought-out displays bring Airborne & Special Operations history into focus.

(910) 643-2766 or asomf.org

3 Missiles and More Museum

720 Channel Boulevard, Topsail Beach

The museum is the result of citizens concerned for the future of the historical Assembly Building built in 1946. This was the U.S. Naval Ordnance Test Facilities. Here top-secret, experimental projects to develop and test ramjet missiles were conducted. The experiments advanced the nation's jet aircraft and missile programs.

Exhibits include pictures and artifacts from Camp Davis, which played a major role in WWII including the formation of WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots) and Operation Bumblebee, the Navy's secret guided missile testing program that operated on Topsail Island from 1946 to 1948.

(910) 328-8663 or missilesandmoremuseum.org

4 North Carolina Aviation Museum and Hall of Fame

Asheboro Regional Airport, Asheboro

Displayed across two Asheboro Regional Airport hangars, the museum houses a collection of aircraft, weapons, uniforms, aircraft models and other memorabilia honoring aviation history in the state.

In 2001, the museum also became the official site of the North Carolina Aviation Hall of Fame.

In addition to its excellent displays, the museum sponsors several events including fly-ins and events honoring local veterans.

(336) 625-0170 or ncaviationmuseumhalloffame.com

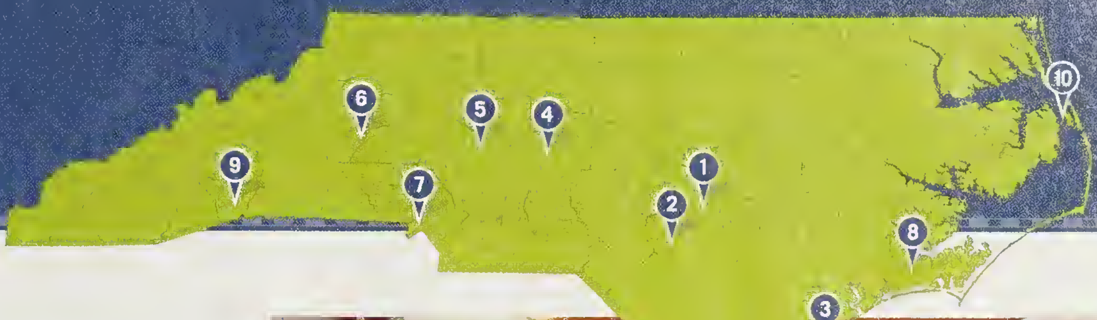
5 North Carolina Transportation Museum

411 S. Salisbury Avenue, Spencer

Once Southern Railway Company's largest steam locomotive servicing facility, this museum is dedicated to all transportation. One of the exhibits is a full-size replica Wright Flyer. The Wagons, Wheels and Wings area of the museum also houses temporary aviation exhibits.

(704) 636-2889 or nctrans.org

By Marilyn Jones



6 Hickory Aviation Museum

Hickory Airport, Hickory

Different facets of the museum are housed in Hickory Airport: aircraft on the former terminal ramp, a visitor center in the former passenger terminal and indoor displays in the former flight service station. In addition to aircraft, visitors will find a revolving aviation artifact collection including weapons, flight suits, an ejection seat and display cases dedicated to Hickory aviation history.

(828) 323-1963 or hickoryaviationmuseum.org

7 Carolinas Aviation Museum

4672 First Flight Drive, Charlotte

By displaying military, civilian and commercial aircraft, helicopters, equipment, gadgets and historic documents, the museum lays out state and national aviation history. A recent addition is the "Miracle on the Hudson" plane — the Airbus A-320 piloted to safety by Capt. "Sully" Sullenberger in 2009. The exhibit includes videotaped passenger interviews of the events of that day.

Many of the exhibits are interactive. Guests can climb into the pilot's seat of an F4 Phantom and knowledgeable docents are on hand to answer questions visitors may have about the aircraft and exhibits.

(704) 997-3770 or carolinasaviation.org

U. S. Marine Corps Aviation Exhibit

201 Tourist Center Drive, Havelock

In cooperation with the U.S. Marine Corps and Department of the Navy, five restored aircraft are on display at the exhibit along with scaled models depicting the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing at Cherry Point aircraft lineage from its inception in 1942. The museum highlights Marine Corps aviation in eastern North Carolina and includes historic photographs and artifacts.

(252) 444-4348 or cityofhavelock.com

iss P3 Pilatus owned by Jerry Jeffers is on display at the North a Aviation Museum and Hall of Fame in Asheboro.

Western North Carolina Air Museum

During an event at the Western North Carolina Air Museum in Hendersonville, an airplane pedal car was raffled as a fundraiser. Here, the proud winner tries out his new wings.

9 Western North Carolina Air Museum

Adjacent to the Hendersonville Airport, Hendersonville

Opened in 1989, this museum is known for its expansive airplane display. Aircraft currently on exhibition: 1954 Cessna 170B, 1930 Aeronca C-3, 1930 Curtiss Robin 4C-1A, 1936 Piper J-2, 1941 Piper J-5, 1960s Wittman W-8 Tailwind, 1930s Corbin Junior Ace, 1915 Nieuport 11 (⅞ scale reproduction), 1917 SE-5A (full scale reproduction), 1928 Heath Parasol, 1917 Curtiss Jenny (⅝ scale reproduction), 1977 Parker scratch-built Formula 1 Air Racer "American Special," Barney Oldfield's "Baby Great Lakes," and the "Sportfire" (¾ scale) British Spitfire-based homebuilt.

Future plans call for exhibits featuring flight manuals, aircraft engines including jet engines, historic photographs and airplane models.

WNCAirMuseum.com

Dare County Regional Airport Museum

10 *410 Airport Road, Manteo*

This museum is known for honoring the North Carolina Civil Air Patrol. The airport at Skyco (about four miles from Dare County airport) and Naval Auxiliary Air Station Manteo were home to Civil Air Patrol Coastal Patrol Base 16 during WWII. It was one of 21 Coastal Patrol Bases formed to combat the German submarine menace on the east coast during the war. The base was in operation from July 22, 1942, until August 31, 1943.

(252) 475-5570 or co.dare.nc.us/airport/museum.asp

Marilyn Jones is a travel writer based in Texas.

Famous North Carolinians

Museums showcase folks who made good

No one can argue that North Carolina has birthed scores of talented folks. Our state's sons and daughters include notable authors, musicians, sports heroes, astronauts, inventors, historians, artists, automobile racers, industrialists and inventors — the list goes on and on.

A great way to learn more about illustrious Tar Heels is to visit museums dedicated in their honor. Here are just four of the many sites that showcase famous North Carolinians.

By the way, when you visit these museums be sure to check out the area's other attractions. Talent, it seems, has a way of attracting more talent.

1 Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum

6136 Burlington Rd., Gibsonville

In 1901, a determined young woman came alone to the backwoods of Guilford County to teach at a small school for African-Americans. When the school closed, Charlotte Hawkins founded Palmer Memorial Institute in a converted blacksmith's shop. Charlotte Hawkins Brown raised funds and built up Palmer to become one of the premier black schools in the nation, equipping her students with discipline, classical education and high standards.

Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum/ NC Historic Sites collection

Classes included drama, music, art, math, literature, and romance languages. Students learned in small circle groups with teachers who served as counselors. Each student received personal training in character development, and all students had to work one hour per day for the school.

During her 50-year presidency, more than 1,000 students graduated. Brown was also active in national efforts to improve opportunities of African-Americans such as the Negro Business League.

The free museum, a few miles east of Greensboro, features an orientation video, exhibits, tours of historic structures (including Brown's residence) and audiovisual presentations. (It's technically in Sedalia, but the Gibsonville address works for GPS.) You can also learn more about the inspiring Dr. Brown by reading "Charlotte Hawkins Brown and Palmer Memorial Institute" (UNC Press; Softcover, 320 pages, $26.95).

Open Tuesdays–Saturdays, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Tuesday–Saturday, 9 a.m. –5 p.m.; (336) 449-4846; chbrownmuseumnchistoricsites.org

2 Ava Gardner Museum

325 East Market Street, Smithfield

Ava Lavinia Gardner was born in Grabtown, Bertie County, on Christmas Eve, 1922, the youngest of seven children in a poor family. After graduating from high school, she took secretarial classes in Wilson.

While visiting her sister in New York City, Gardner posed for her sister's husband, photographer Larry Tarr. A talent scout saw her photo in Tarr's studio window and Gardner soon found herself doing a screen test for MGM's Louis B. Mayer. (He supposedly said: "She can't act. She can't talk. She's terrific. Sign her.") At 18, Ava signed a seven-year movie contract for fifty dollars a week.

Despite her limited acting ability, she stood out like a klie light. Actor Mickey Rooney quickly married her but she was more flattered than in love and they divorced 17 months later. Her second marriage to much-married bandleader Artie Shaw lasted one year, with Shaw playing Svengali and molding her like a pet project.

Meanwhile, Gardner moved up from B-grade films. Breathtaking in the noir film, "The Killers," she also delighted audiences with her roles in "The Hucksters" (1947), "One Touch of Venus" (1948) and "Show Boat" (1951). Her performance in "Mogambo" (1953) earned her an Academy Award nomination. A friend of author Ernest Hemingway—who could match him drink for drink—she acted in two films based on his books.

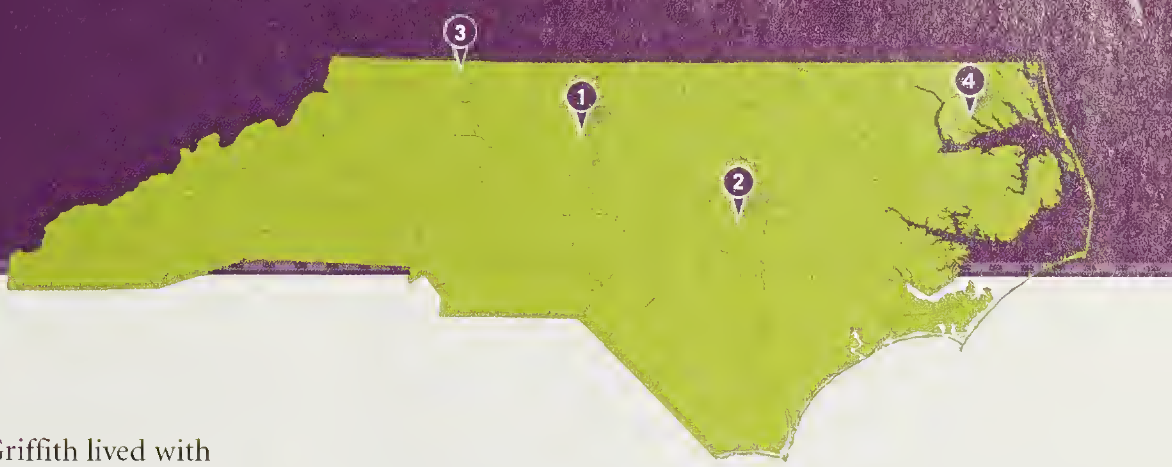
Gardner's final marriage was to crooner-turned-actor Frank Sinatra. Sinatra's jealousy, coupled with Gardner's substantial drinking habit, helped seal their divorce. Despit their tumultuous marriage, they remained good friends for the rest of her life.

Gardner eventually moved to Spain, where she proved a fan of bullfighting and flamenco dance. She died in 1990, and was buried in Sunset Memorial Park in Smithfield, nex to family members.

The Ava Gardner Museum has extensive memorabilia. During a self-guided tour through more than 5,000 square feet of exhibit space, you'll see Ava's extraordinary costume movie posters and awards. One of the latest exhibits feature photographs and accessories from Ava's homes in Californi New York, Spain and England.

Open Monday–Saturday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m.–5 p.m.; Admission: $8 adults; $7 seniors and students; $6 children; (919) 934-5830; avagardner.org

By Karen Olson House



3 Andy Griffith Museum,

218 Rockford St., Mount Airy

Born an only child in Mount Airy, Andy Griffith lived with relatives and slept in dresser drawers until his parents could afford to buy a home. At Mount Airy High School, he participated in drama and a local minister nurtured Andy's love of music, teaching him to sing and play the trombone. After graduation, Andy joined the cast in "The Lost Colony," an outdoor drama about Roanoke Island still performed today.

He eventually graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a music degree. After teaching in Goldsboro, he and his new wife, a fellow performer at UNC, developed a sing-and-dance routine. One of Andy's comedy monologues, called "What It Was Was Football," was commercially released and wildly popular. In 1954, he won the role of Will Stockdale in the TV version of the play "No Time For Sergeants." Later, two Tony nominations helped him land his own sitcom, "The Andy Griffith Show." An immediate hit, Andy played a gentle, philosophical sheriff alongside his longtime friend Don Knotts, who played the comical, high-strung deputy Barney Fife in small-town Mayberry.

After leaving the show, Griffith was less successful for awhile, then struck gold again as a folksy country lawyer in the legal drama "Matlock." Griffith also acted in numerous TV and feature films. (Many are surprised to learn he also played some pretty dark, dimensional characters that revealed his wide acting range.) He died in 2012 at his home in Manteo.

Hubert Jones / Surry Arts Council

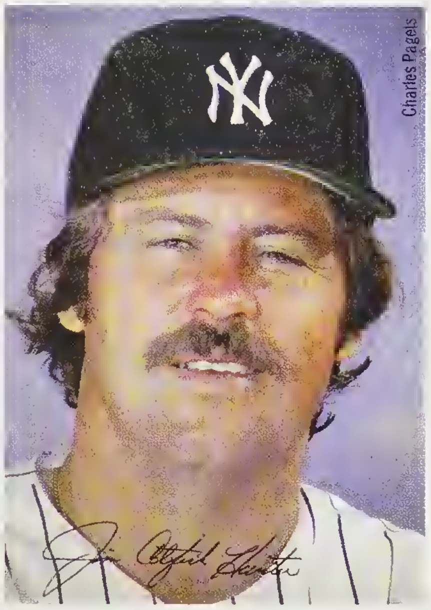
The museum offers the largest collection of Andy Griffith memorabilia known, gathered by his good friend Emmett Forrest. New items are donated and archived pieces are brought, so visitors always have something new to see.

Visitors can enjoy career photographs, as well as props from "The Andy Griffith Show" such as Andy's desk, the Mayberry jail key and Barney's clothes. There's also a section on actress and Mount Airy resident Betty Lynn. Lynn played sweet Thelma Lou and appears there on the third Friday of each month to chat with visitors. There's also many items donated by the cast of "Matlock."

Open Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.; Sundays, 1:30–4:30 p.m.; Admission: $3; $5 with audio guide; (336) 786-1604; andygriffithmuseum.com

4 Catfish Hunter Museum

118 Market St., Hertford


Charles Pagels

James Augustus Hunter, the youngest of eight kids, enjoyed hunting, fishing and playing baseball with his brothers. Major league scouts noted his pitching skill at Perquimans High School, but in his senior year, Hunter was wounded while hunting. The accident left him somewhat hobbled at the time, but the Kansas City Athletics signed him anyway.

Hunter began socking in big wins with his pinpoint control. He was the highest paid pitcher in baseball when he signed with the New York Yankees in 1975. The Yankees won three straight pennants with Hunter. He was inducted in the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1987.

The likeable pitcher retired from baseball early at age 33, due to arm strain and diabetes. Hunter was later diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, also called Lou Gehrig's Disease) and died at age 53.

The free museum is tucked in a room at Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce in Hertford. Visitors can see a photo of Catfish signing his first contract, his Sports Illustrated covers, a Yankees paycheck, a video and more. Get Sid Eley, the chamber's executive president, to tell you about "Jimmy." ("Catfish" was a professional nickname.)

To see a UNC-TV video and read more about the museum, visit the website page.

Open Monday–Friday, 9:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.; also most Saturdays 10 a.m.–12 noon. Special openings can be arranged for groups who call ahead. (252) 426-5657; visitperquimans.com/catfishhunter.html

Karen Olson House, a contributing writer and editor for Carolina Country magazine, lives in Raleigh.

More jewels for the crown

Since 2000, North Carolina has added 8 places to the state park system

The North Carolina state park system all began with, you guessed it, a group of concerned citizens. Led by Gov. Locke Craig in 1916, local citizens wished to protect the summit of Mt. Mitchell, the highest peak in the eastern U.S. that rises 6,684 feet above Yancey County. The summit and the surrounding forest officially became Mt. Mitchell State Park that year, the first in the state, the first state park in the Southeast and one of the first in the nation.

Today, the state park system has 36 parks, in addition to four state recreation areas and two state natural areas, more than 200,000 acres of land. About 14.2 million people annually visit these parks to learn more about an area's bio-diversity, history and culture, escape into wilderness, grab a picnic under a tree, paddle the waterways, hike various levels of trails, follow the footprints of critters and breathe in the smells of the surrounding flora.

Since 2000, eight new state parks have opened. Two had been owned privately, Chimney Rock State Park and Grandfather Mountain State Park.

The following is a look at three of the newest parks to come online, as well as brief descriptions of the other park system additions:

1 Elk Knob State Park

5564 Meat Camp Rd., Todd

NC Division of Parks and Recreation—Charlie Peek

View from Elk Knob summit

Elk Knob is the second tallest peak in Watauga County at 5,520 feet. About 30 minutes north of Boone, the state park (once a state natural area) is in an interim development stage, with a park office and contact station, picnic area, parking, restroom facilities and backcountry camping areas. My 9-year-old daughter and I decided to tackle the 2-mile moderate-to-strenuous Summit Trail that leads to the 5,520-foot peak via a winding, ascending mulch and rock path. Two other trails are also available: the 2-mile Backcountry Trail (moderate-to-strenuous) and the 1-mile Beech Tree Trail (easy).

With hiking sticks, water bottles and a snack-laden backpack, we started the trek from the base parking area ready to tackle the 1,000-foot uphill hike on a warm early October morning. The hardwood forest, rhododendrons and evergreens add a lushness to the area. Grouse and other small animals skittered in the leaves and a broad-winged hawk suddenly surprised us by taking off from his tree perch. Moss-covered decaying logs often yielded a treasure or two, with one log's pale yellow fungus growth in the shape of a thick-maned lion's head.

As we climbed, switchbacks on the mountainside afforde views of the mountainous region in Watauga and Ashe counties, just beginning to show the fall colors. Approachin the summit, the cedar, beech, oak, birch and maple trees become stunted and gnarled, an affect of winter's cold, strong winds. The gnarled trees provide a colorful tunnel for the final climb to the summit. On a clear day, the panoramic view from the north and south sides at the top include Three Top and Bluff Mountains, Mount Jefferson, Grandfather Mountain, Mt. Mitchell, Mt. Rodgers (Va.), an the Iron Mountains in Virginia and Tennessee. We weren't disappointed with the view.

(828) 297-7261

2 Carvers Creek State Park

2505 Long Valley Rd., Spring Lake

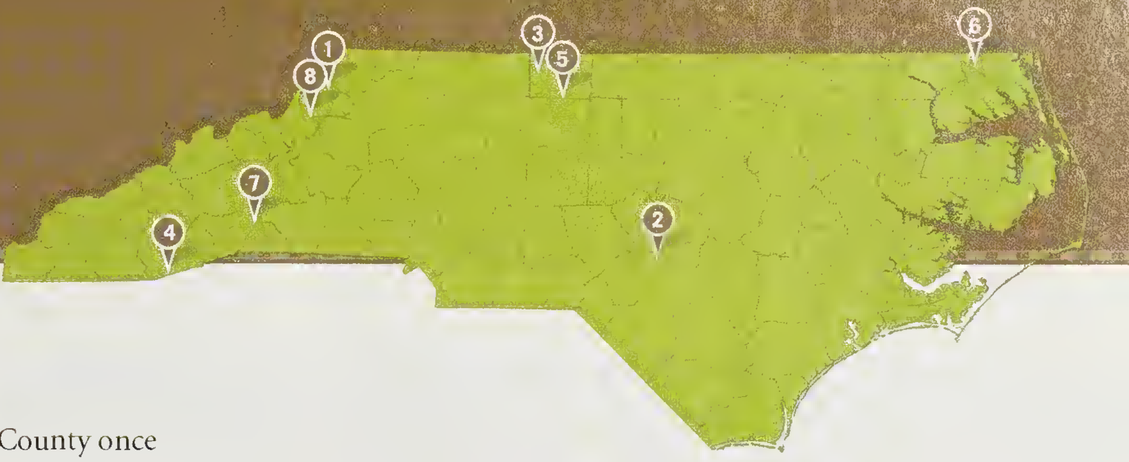
Carvers Creek State Park is spread over 4,000 acres in Harnett and Cumberland counties on what once was part of the Rockefeller family's Overhills estate. One 2,912-acre portion of the property, Long Valley Farm, a favorite respite for James S. Rockefeller, opened to partial public access in September 2013. His 1930s era home sits on the banks of a 100-acre, sprawling cypress millpond. For now, reservation are required for a guided tour of the home. Other historic farm structures are also on site. The surrounding land, long leaf pine forest and cypress pond are open for exploration.

The day I visited in late February, the unusually warm temperatures brought out local fishermen casting lines into the swampy waters hoping to catch largemouth bass or at least a bream or crappie. The walk down the hard-packed sand road from the park office to the millpond is about a half mile, leading to the 0.75-mile Cypress Point Loop Trail that takes you to a peninsula overlooking the millpond and back to the house. The wooded areas house a variety of woodpeckers—including the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker—songbirds, fox squirrels and various tree fro species. Fallen trees in the pond often have turtles sunning atop while birds skim the surface hunting insects.

The park's master plan includes a visitor center and camping areas.

(910) 436-4681

By Renee C. Gannon



3 Mayo River State Park

500 Old Mayo Park Rd., Mayodan

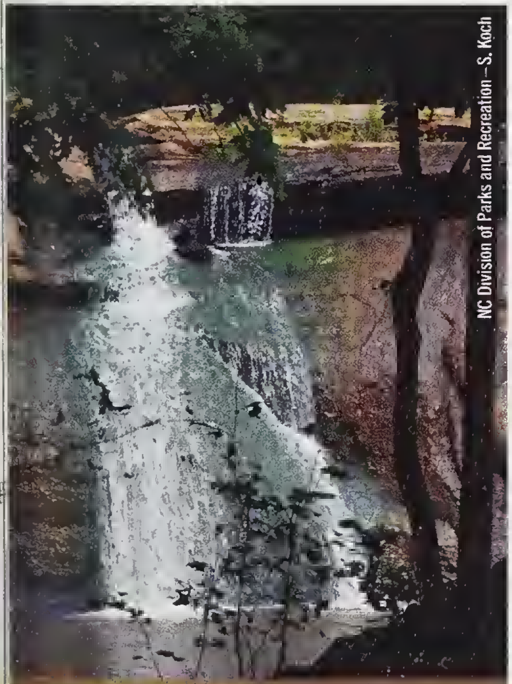
The Mayo River State Park in Rockingham County once served as a community park, with picnic shelters and ponds for citizens of the local textile towns. Planning to create a river corridor park, the state purchased the land in 2003. The idea is to add more land along the Mayo River to the park's recreational amenities, including a canoe/kayak launch site under the Hwy. 220 Business bridge just outside of Mayodan. Currently, no public river access is available from the park.

For now, the 2,244-acre park offers a visitor contact station, restroom facilities, picnic tables and shelters, grills and fishing ponds near the parking areas, as well as two hiking trails (a half-mile easy loop and 1.8-mile easy-to-moderate loop) at the main site. The park also has a half-mile waterfall hiking trail about 30 minutes by car north of the park, a few miles south of the Virginia border.

The snow-covered 1.8-mile ridge trail I chose meandered into a hardwood forest of yellow poplar, white oak and sweet gum trees. The babbling sounds of the creek running alongside faded as I trekked a gradual uphill path. On this cool, overcast day, I had the trail to myself, except for the songbirds, deer and wild turkey. This trail leads to the Mayo Mountain Ridge before looping back to the parking area. Cedar Mountain's shadow can be seen at the ridge top overlooking the valley.

The park ranger urged me to drive north to the Fall Creek waterfall off DeShazo Mills Road. I took his suggestion and am glad I did. The red clay path from the small parking area to the waterfall featured deer prints in the mud and snow, running along Fall Creek and into the woods. The half-mile hike is easy, until you are at the waterfall, then a little climbing is involved to see the full view of the cascading water. The site is isolated, so caution is advised. The park ranger stated that someday a hiker will be able to go from the main park site to the waterfall without setting foot in a car or on a blacktop road.

(336) 427-2530


NC Division of Parks and Recreation – S. Koch

reek Falls, Mayo River State Park

Also new to the state park system since 2000

4 Gorges State Park

976 Grassy Ridge Rd., Sapphire

8,000 acres in Transylvania County with waterfalls, gorges, rare plants and animals, as well as elevation changes that will satisfy any naturalist or hiker.

(828) 966-9099

5 Haw River State Park

339 Conference Center Dr., Browns Summit

300 acres in Guilford County with an environmental education center, short hiking trails and a six-acre lake.

(336) 342-6163

6 Dismal Swamp State Park

2294 US Hwy. 17 N., South Mills

14,000 acres of hardwood forests, wetlands and canals in Camden County with a rich history, black bear, bobcats and at least 43 species of butterfly. Visitors traverse the park by foot, bike and paddle.

(252) 771-6592

7 Chimney Rock State Park

Hwy. 64/74A, Chimney Rock

In 2007, North Carolina purchased the private Chimney Rock nature park to add to the previously purchased Hickory Nut Gorge acreage in Rutherford, Polk, Henderson and Buncombe counties. The 5,700 acres includes the iconic 315-foot spire on the gorge's southern side, nature center, gift shop, elevator to the rock summit, and a network of hiking trails.

(828) 625-1823

8 Grandfather Mountain State Park

9872 Hwy. 105 S., Banner Elk

The state bought 2,456 acres along the crest of the popular Grandfather Mountain in 2008.

(828) 963-9522

Information on all of the N.C. State Parks can be found at ncparks.gov as well as on a mobile app called N.C. State Parks Guide by Pocket Ranger, free for both iOS and Android.

Free as a bird

Help yourself to North Carolina's heavenly host

I remember Christmastime my first year in North Carolina, last century, when I bobbed in my wetsuit on the surf off Pea Island refuge just beyond the breakers. Looking into a Carolina blue sky, I saw four northern gannets dive from about 100 feet at breakneck speed, their six-foot wingspan tucked back, and plunge into the ocean. I literally thought I had died and gone to heaven. That same winter, in the Lake Landing district of Hyde County, I saw the angels: hundreds of bright white snow geese hooting and honking on broad expanses of farmland.

Melinda Fawver

If you're lucky, you can see the yellow-breasted chat statewide in summer.

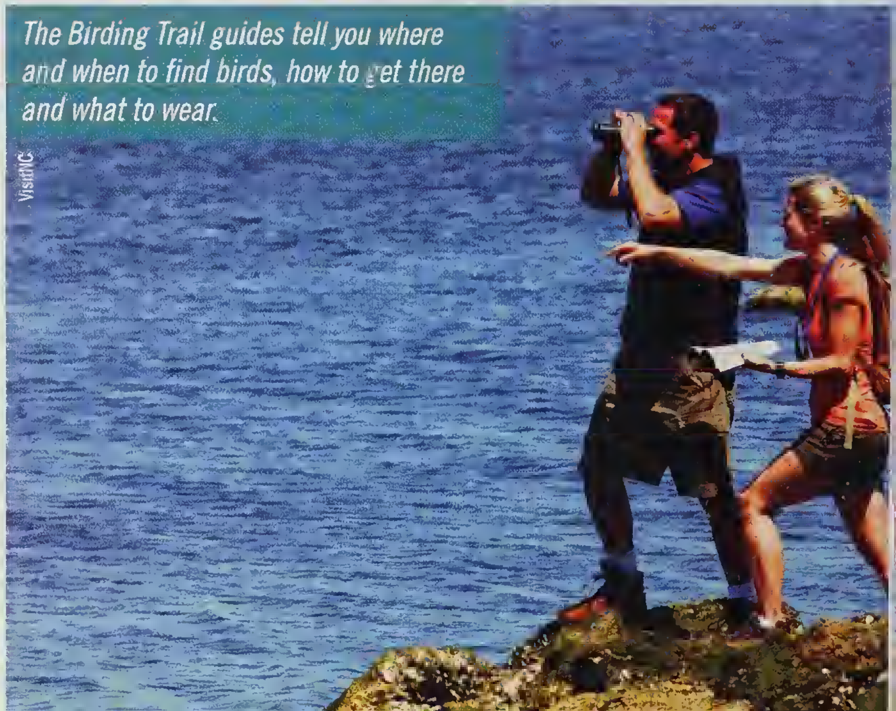
The next spring, my wife, Susan, and I ventured for the first time into Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge where an indigo bunting on a tree branch didn't flinch while watching us walk along the road.

I am not one who keeps a "life list" of the number, species, dates and locations of birds I see. But for some reason, I remember them anyway.

I remember seeing a red-cockaded woodpecker for the first time in my life one spring afternoon when you could walk the woods quietly in Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve in Moore County. The first bald eagle I saw in North Carolina glided overhead as I paddled my kayak on Jordan Lake. On the grounds of the 4-H Rural Life Center in Halifax County one winter evening at dusk, I stood mesmerized for maybe 12 minutes as thousands of blackbirds streamed across a fading salmon-colored sky. One summer day, Jerry Plemmons of French Broad Electric led me 4,000 feet up to Max Patch in Madison County where yellow-breasted chats flitted among wildflowers. Visiting at Haywood Electric one fall, I took a long drive down Blue Ridge Parkway to Devil's Courthouse (Milepost 422) because I'd heard about the peregrine falcons there but I returned to Waynesville after not seeing any.

It's hard to know why people like to see birds. Maybe it's the "free as a bird" idea. Maybe it's the amazing coloring they wear—they say God had fun whil painting the birds—or how they fly. A hummingbird can fly in reverse. A woodcock blends with the ground and eats worms, so it doesn't show off its looks and can be hard to spot, but whe the male wants a female in the spring he buzzes loudly, spirals straight up in the air, shows off up there, and dives back down with a thud. Bird names are fun, too, such as woodcock (also know as mud snipe, timberdoodle and bogsucker). Maybe it's because birds have been on Earth for about 100 million years and resemble dinosaurs.

Some fanatics go to extremes to see birds. (See the movie "The Big Year," with Jack Black, Steve Martin and Owen Wilson.) I remember John O. Fussell III, who in 1994 published the amazing 540-page "A Birder's Guide to Coastal North Carolina," taking off from Stumpy Point one mornin



The Birding Trail guides tell you where and when to find birds, how to get there and what to wear.

By Michael E.C. Gery

rn gannets visit off the coast in winter and ve from 100 feet in the air and swim down p as 50 feet into the ocean.

VisitNC

See a rare scarlet ibis at Sylvan Heights Bird Park in Scotland Neck.

Steve Byland

The not-so-colorful American woodcock hides in many spots in the coastal plain and foothills.

and driving some 500 miles to the Blue Ridge Parkway to see a rare warbler, then coming right back.

But John O. Fussell III on that trip could have seen lots of great birds in dozens of great locations along the way. North Carolina claims about 440 species of birds who hang here in different seasons. We've got high mountains, foothills, slow and fast rivers, broad meadows, game lands, swamps, savannahs, estuaries, lakes, bays, remote islands and, of course, the ocean and beaches. Parks and protected refuges are everywhere, but so are private preserves that landowners open to the public.

Trips to see birds can be rewarding outings for families, students, clubs, a suitor who wants to impress someone, and individuals who want be alone with peace and quiet and bird songs. Susan and I took my mother on one of Brian Patteson's pelagic seabirding excursions, two hours on a headboat out to the Gulf Stream with other birders where we saw petrels, shearwaters, fulmars, skuas, a white-tailed tropicbird—birds you can't see from land unless they fly astray. One summer day we took Susan's mother to the Reynolda House Gardens in Winston-Salem and happened to see a scarlet tanager who was as pleasing as the art inside the house. A group of Touchstone Energy cooperative associates spent a morning appreciating the scarlet ibis and Demoiselle crane among nearly 2,000 exotic waterfowl that are propagated and conserved at Scotland Neck's Sylvan Heights Bird Park.

The North Carolina Birding Trail

All these sites and many more have been placed on The North Carolina Birding Trail. Published in three volumes 2007–2009 by a partnership of six agencies and organizations, the Birding Trail covers 310 locations where you can see birds. Combined with the website ncbirdingtrail.org, it is a comprehensive guide not only to sites, but also to how to get there, what birds to look for, and what else there is to do nearby.

The guide series makes an interesting point of how birding benefits local economies. A recent survey reported that 2.6 million wildlife watchers in North Carolina in one year spent $916 million while traipsing around out here. The Birding Trail guides even supply a set of Birder Calling Cards that you can leave at local businesses telling them that "we were here" to see the birds.

The three volumes cover birding sites in the Coast (16 regions), the Piedmont (15 regions), and the Mountains (18 regions). Not all the trails are in remote rural areas. There's Freedom Park in downtown Charlotte and Lake Crabtree County Park off I-40 in The Triangle. And for those places way, way out there, you get detailed descriptions on how to get there (including GPS coordinates and Google Maps directions online), as well as what to wear and how to survive the elements.

The North Carolina Birding Trail is evaluating its plans and may add new sites and information to its project.

Resources

The North Carolina Birding Trail guides
Distributed by University of North Carolina Press, available at bookstores and through the NC Wildlife Resources Commission for $10 each. (866) 945-3746 or ncwildstore.com

Search the complete trail
ncbirdingtrail.org

All about North Carolina's birds: Carolina Bird Club
carolinabirdclub.org

The mother of all bird sites
allaboutbirds.org

For helping birds
NCPartnersinflight.org

Local centers and chapters
nc.audubon.org

April Events

MISS CAISON
CAPT. JEFF
A-ker

Swing by Holden Beach on Saturday and Sunday, April 26–27, for the Days At The Dock festival starting at 9 a.m. Peruse arts and crafts, have a tasty lunch, see a motorcycle show and a bopple race, and listen to live bands. (910) 842-3828 or greaterholdenbeachmerchants.com

Mountains

California Dreamin'
Musical journey through California pop scene
April 3, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
ashecountyarts.org

Oil Painting Workshop
With Lenore De Pree
April 4, West Jefferson
(336) 846-3827
florenceartschool.org

Rotary Auction For Education
April 10–12, Lincolnton
(704) 735-8646
rotarylinc.org

Spring Soiree
Music by "Summerdaze"
April 12, Lenoir
(828) 754-6262
robinsnestcac.org

Spring Fest
April 12, West Jefferson
(336) 846-2787
ashecountyarts.org

Simon Says Bird Walk
April 12, Chimney Rock
(828) 625-9611
chimneyrockpark.com

War For Empire
Battle re-enactments
April 12–13, Statesville
(704) 873-5882
fortdobbs.org

Naturalist Niche Series
April 12 & 26, Chimney Rock Park
(828) 625-9611
chimneyrockpark.com

Spring Homeschool Day
April 16, Chimney Rock
(828) 625-9611
chimneyrockpark.com/education

Quilt Show
April 18–19, Rutherfordton
(770) 713-9049

Bikes, Butts & BBQ Fundraiser & Ride
April 19, Shelby
(704) 482-7638
linemanmuseumride.org

Easter Egg Hunt
April 19, Terrell
(828) 478-2518
rehobethumc.org

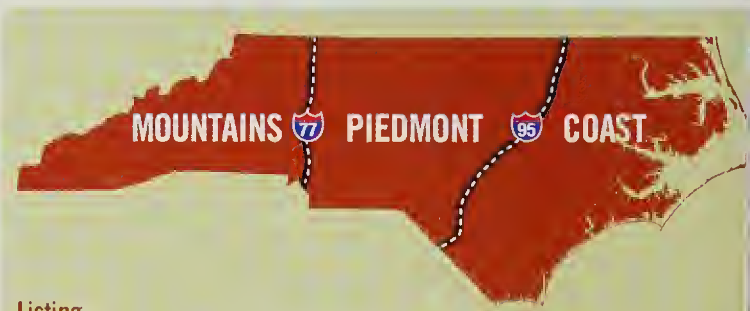
Easter Sunrise Service
April 20, Chimney Rock
(828) 625-9611
chimneyrockpark.com

Spring Plant Sale
April 25–26, Hendersonville
(828) 698-61-4
bullingtongardens.org

Wildflower Walk-A-Bout
April 26, Chimney Rock
(828) 625-9611
chimneyrockpark.com

County Garden Fair
April 26, Statesville
(704) 873-0507
iredell.ces.ncsu.edu

Earth Day
April 26, Chimney Rock
(828) 625-9611
chimneyrockpark.com



Listing Deadlines:
For June: April 25
For July: May 25

Submit Listings Online:
Visit carolinacountry.com and click "Carolina Adventures" to add your event to the magazine and/or our website. Or e-mail events@carolinacountry.com.

Nature Photography Workshop
April 26–27, Chimney Rock
(828) 625-9611
lessaucier.com

ONGOING

Thunder Road Cruise In
First Sunday through Oct., Mount Airy
(336) 401-3900

Street Dance
Monday nights, Hendersonville
(828) 693-9708
historichendersonville.org

Historic Carson House Guided Tours
Wednesday–Saturdays
(828) 724-4948
www.historiccarsonhouse.com

Bluegrass Music Jam
Thursdays, Marion
(828) 652-2215

Cruise In
Second Sat. through Sept., Dobson
(336) 648-2309

Piedmont

Giselle
The Russian National Ballet Theatre
April 1, Pembroke
(910) 521-6361
uncp.edu/gpac

Much Ado About Nothing
Shakespeare comedy
April 1–5, Raleigh
(919) 508-2362
peace.edu/events

Toast To Tour Wine Gala
April 3, Chapel Hill
(919) 682-0449
jldoc.org

Three Dog Night in Concert
April 4, Pembroke
(910) 521-6361
uncp.edu/gpac

Rickey Smiley & Friends
Comedy show
April 4, Fayetteville
(910) 438-4121
atthecrown.com

Back Porch Stories
April 4, Wadesboro
(704) 694-5211
carolinaswritersconference.org

Antique Tractor Show & Festival
April 4–5, Albemarle
(704) 982-7896

Macbeth
Shakespeare drama
April 4 & 11–13, Fayetteville
(910) 678-7186
gilberttheater.com

Oldies, Rock & Blues Music
April 4 & 18, Hope Mills
(910) 426-4109

Home Roam Tour
April 5, Durham
(919) 682-0449
jldoc.org

Writers Conference
April 5, Wadesboro
(704) 694-5211
carolinaswritersconference.org

Earth Day Celebration
April 5, Gastonia
(704) 866-6908
schielemuseum.org

The Great Romantics
Berlioz, Bruckner & Brahms
April 5, Fayetteville
(910) 433-4690
fayettevillesymphony.org

Mustang Show & Celebration
April 5, Fayetteville
(910) 433-1457

Easter Breakfast & Hunt
April 5, Hope Mills
(910) 483-5311

Gun & Knife Show
April 5–6, Fayetteville
(910) 438-4100
atthecrown.com

Glen Davis Memorial Concert
April 8, Asheboro
(336) 241-2497

An Era Of Transition?
Fine & Decorative Arts lecture
April 10, Raleigh
(919) 833-3431
joellane.org

Easter Jam Concert
April 11, Fayetteville
(910) 630-7062
methodist.edu

Military Vehicle & Collectors Show
April 11–12, Denton
(704) 983-5940

Spring Bridal Showcase
April 12, Hillsborough
(919) 357-3455
forthemomenteventservices.com

Spring Fling
April 12, Spring Lake
(910) 436-0011
spring-lake.org

India Festival
April 12, Fayetteville
(910) 438-4100
atthecrown.com

Green Day's American Idiot
High-octane musical
April 15, Pembroke
(910) 521-6361
uncp.edu/gpac

Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt
April 17, Belmont
(704) 825-5586
cityofbelmont.org

Darius Rucker
True Believer music tour
April 18, Fayetteville
(910) 438-4100
atthecrown.com

Bluegrass Convention
April 18–19, Yadkinville
(336) 409-4775
yadkingrass.com

Our Way Festival
BBQ contest, street dance
April 19, Broadway
(919) 258-9922
broadwaync.com

Project Appleseed
History and marksmanship
April 19, Ramseur
(919) 280-9389
appleseedinfo.org

Easter Egg Hunt
April 19, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
lattaplantation.org

Zen & The Art of Piano
David Michael Wolff recital
April 22, Fayetteville
(910) 687-4746
carolinaphil.org

Fortune Feimster Comedy Show
April 24, Raleigh
(919) 508-2362
peace.edu/events

Wind/Concert Band & Jazz Monarchs
April 24, Fayetteville
(910) 630-7100
methodist.edu/home/public_events.shtml

Lysistrata
Greek comedy
April 24-26, Fayetteville
(910) 486-1474
uncfsu.edu

All-Choirs Concert
April 25, Fayetteville
(910) 630-7100
methodist.edu/music

Antiques Festival
April 25-26, Liberty
(336) 622-3041
libertyantiquesfestival.com

Dogwood Festival
April 25-27, Fayetteville
(910) 323-1934
faydogwoodfestival.com

Archaeology Day
April 26, Warrenton
(252) 257-2654

149th Anniversary Of Surrender
At Bennett Place State Historic Site
April 26-27, Durham
(919) 807-7300
ncdcr.gov

Pottery Studio Tour & Kiln Openings
April 26-27, Seagrove
(336) 517-7272
discoverseagrove.com

Lizzie Lane's Colonial Tea
April 27, Raleigh
(919) 833-3431
joellane.org

Listen & Learn Series
Country, bluegrass music history in Charlotte area
April 27, Waxhaw
(704) 843-1832
museumofthewaxhaws.com

Quilt Show
April 27, Cedar Grove
(919) 732-8994

ONGOING

Maness Pottery & Music Barn
Dinner, music, fellowship
Tuesday nights, Midway
(910) 948-4897
www.liveatclydes.com

Durham Civil War Roundtable
Third Thursdays, Durham
(919) 643-0466

Art After Hours
Second Fridays, Wake Forest
(919) 570-0765
www.sunflowerstudiowf.com

Betty Lynn (Thelma Lou) Appearance at Andy Griffith Museum
Third Fridays, Mount Airy
(336) 786-7998
www.visitmayberry.com

Fourth Friday
Arts, shopping
Fayetteville
(910) 483-5311
www.theartscouncil.org

Contemporary Art Of Muslim World
Through April 8, Fayetteville
(910) 486-1474
uncfsu.edu

Pablo Picasso Ceramics Exhibit
Through April 12, Fayetteville
(910) 630-7107
davidmccunegallery.org

The 39 Steps
Fast-paced whodunit
April 17–20 & 24–27, Fayetteville
(910) 323-4234
cfrt.org/season.php

Urban Art
Through April 19, Fayetteville
(910) 323-1776
theartscouncil.com

Take in "Giselle" on Tuesday, April 1, performed by the Russian National Ballet Theatre in Pembroke. (910) 521-6361 or uncp.edu/gpa

Flights Of Fancy
Through April 20, Hillsborough
(919) 732-5001
hillsboroughgallery.com

Teachers Of Tradition
Award-winning potters
Through April 26, Seagrove
(336) 873-8430
ncpotterycenter.org

Art Pottery: Utility to Unique
Through Aug. 16, Fayetteville
(910) 433-1944

Dwell Art Show
April 25–May 25, Hillsborough
(919) 732-5001
hillsboroughgallery.com

Thunder Road Cruise-In
First Sundays April 25–Oct. 25, Mount Airy
(336) 401-3900

Coast

Business Expo
April 3, Greenville
(252) 752-4101
greenville.org

Schoolhouse Rock Live!
April 4, Greenville
(800) 329-4200
ecu.edu

Vendor Showcase
April 5, Tarboro
(252) 544-0120

LIFEfest
Community outreach fair
April 5, Tarboro
(252) 823-5166
edgecombe.edu

Bill Cosby–Far From Finished Tour
April 6, Bolivia
(910) 755-7416
bccowa.com/bill-cosby.html

Shad Festival
April 7–13, Grifton
(252) 414-0428
griftonnc.com

Free Spirit Concert
April 10, Mount Olive
(800) 653-0854
umo.edu

Drew Nelson Concert
April 11, New Bern
(252) 646-4657
downeastfolkarts.org

Building A Successful Stepfamily
Family conference
April 11–12, Princeton
(919) 735-5411
bridgechurch.cc

PirateFest
Music, arts, swashbuckling
April 11–12, Greenville
piratefestnc.com

Drew Nelson Concert
April 12, Beaufort
(252) 646-4657
downeastfolkarts.org

Garden Club Homes Tour
April 12, Bath
(252) 414-1428
nchistoricsites.org/bath

Walk To Defeat ALS
April 12, Greenville
(919) 390-0121
web.alsa.org/downeast

Pottery Festival
April 12, New Bern
(252) 224-1446

Lighthouse Run & Walk
Three races
April 12, Oak Island
(910) 457-6964
lighthouse10k.com

65th N.C. Herring Festival
April 18–19, Plymouth
(252) 217-5363
ncherringfestival.com

Spring Festival
April 18–19, Southport
(910) 279-4616
downtownsouthport.org/spring-festival

Slamsession Car Show
April 19, Greenville
(252) 758-6916

Family Day
April 19, Ocean Isle Beach
(910) 579-1016
museumplanetarium.org

Steep Canyon Rangers
Bluegrass quintet
April 24, Rocky Mount
(252) 985-5197
dunncenter.com

Dogwood Festival
April 24–27, Farmville
(252) 753-5814
farmvilledogwoodfest.com

Marine Market
Nautical items, new and used
April 26, Washington
(252) 947-1487
whda.org

Dog Parade
April 26, Oriental
(252) 745-7297
www.pamlicopaws.com

Pickle Festival
April 26, Mount Olive
(919) 658-3113
ncpicklefest.org

Days At The Dock
April 26–27, Holden Beach
(910) 842-3828
greaterholdenbeachmerchants.com

ONGOING

Art Walk
First Friday, Elizabeth City
(252) 335-5330
http://ecncart.com

Art Walk
First Friday, Greenville
(252) 561-8400
www.uptowngreenville.com

Cheryl Hinton Hooks Art
Through April 4, Mount Olive
(800) 653-0854
umo.edu

Pippin
Musical about a prince
Through April 12, New Bern
(252) 633-3318
rivertowneplayers.com

Second Saturday Tours
Through October, Murfreesboro
Historic district guided tours
(252) 398-5922

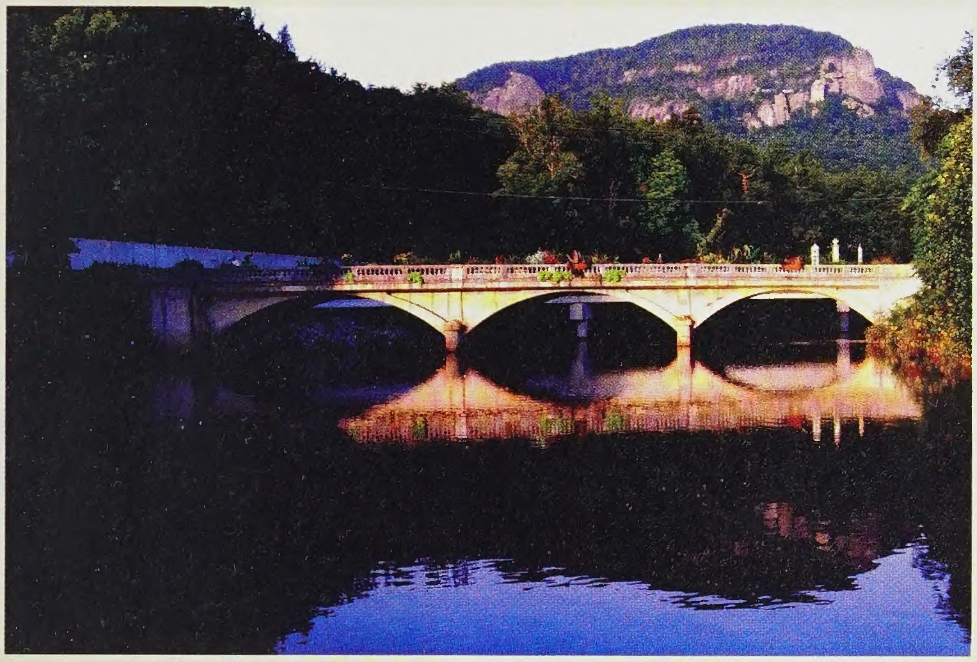
There are more than 200 markets in North Carolina offering fresh produce and more. Some are open year-round; others open in March or April. For information about one near you, visit ncfarmfresh.com/farmmarkets.asp.

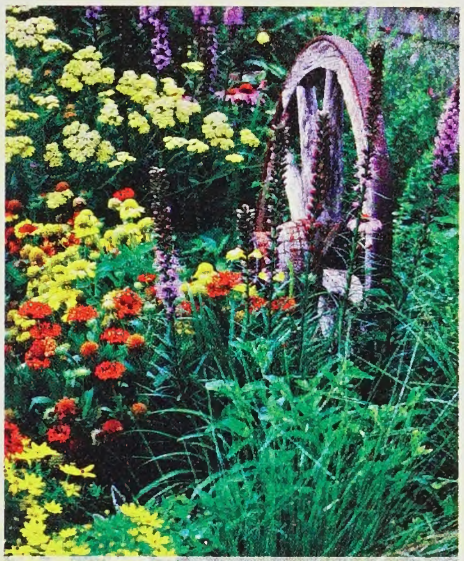
CAROLINA COUNTRY adventures

Lake Lure Flowering Bridge: a gateway to somewhere beautiful

By Lee Armstrong; Photos by Mike Lumpkin

Winding path through pretty plant beds





Local artwork and ornaments complement colorful flowers

Between Chimney Rock and Lake Lure in western Rutherford County, scenic highways merge to cross the Broad River (locally called the Rocky Broad). Here, a bridge is more than just a way to go over the water below. On the Lake Lure Flowering Bridge a serpentine path winds through stone-faced raised garden beds. Plants rise out of these beds against the backdrop of a graceful balustrade from another era, a time when bridges were built for form as well as function. The bridge and its adjacent gardens also feature local artwork and ornaments that complement the scenic beauty of the Hickory Nut Gorge backdrop.

The Lake Lure Flowering Bridge, once a bustling thoroughfare, is home today to an eclectic variety of blooms and bushes that pays homage to western North Carolina's natural flora. This historic bridge built in 1925 was reclassified as a pedestrian walkway in 2011 when a new bridge was opened to traffic.

Volunteers came together to preserve and enhance the bridge, forming the Friends of the Lake Lure Flowering Bridge. Over a two-year period, they sought donations and hired a landscape architectural firm to create a design for gardens. Plans in hand, the group prepared the bridge infrastructure to allow for its repurposing. They planted gardens on the east end of the bridge in late 2012, then on the bridge itself in April 2013.

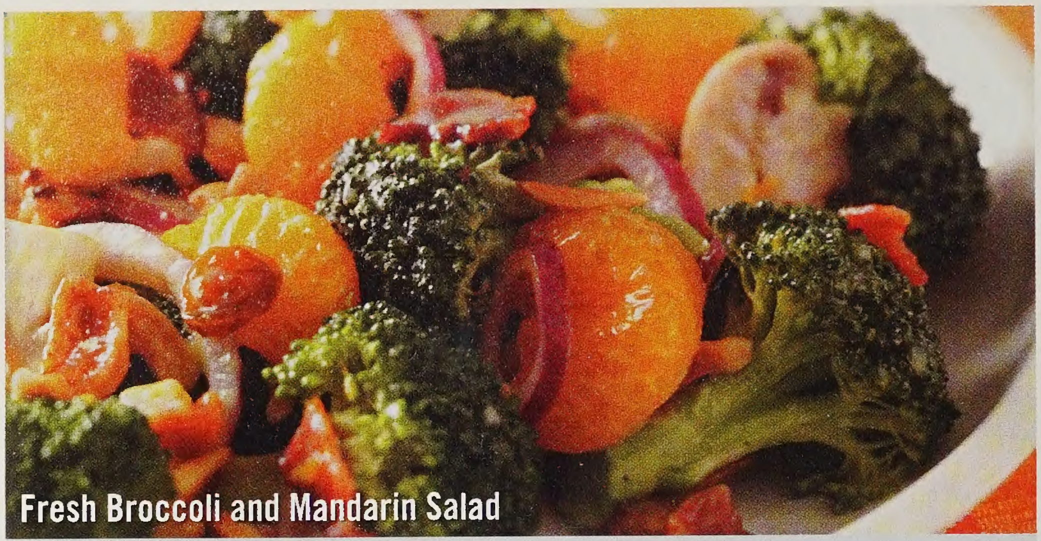
The East Gardens lie along the pathway that begins on the other end of the Lake Lure Town Center and continues across the bridge. Also in the East Gardens is a handcrafted locust bench designed and built by a local artisan. Continued development of gardens is progressing at the bridge's west end, to be developed further as funds become available. Eventually, the gardens will extend approximately 350 feet from end to end.

The Lake Lure Flowering Bridge has been recognized as a Certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. The bridge is also part of a year-round walk recognized by the American Volkssport Association.

Getting to the Flowering Bridge

Maps to the bridge are available at lakelurefloweringbridge.com and via Google Maps. Access NC Hwy. 9 from US Hwy. 74 or US Hwy. 64 from I-26 in Hendersonville or Highway 74-A from I-40 in Asheville.

Lee Armstrong and Mike Lumpkin are members of the Friends of the Lake Lure Flowering Bridge, volunteers who live around the Hickory Nut Gorge and who planted and maintain the bridge.



Fresh Broccoli and Mandarin Salad

Custard Dressing

½ cup sugar
1½ teaspoons cornstarch
1 teaspoon ground mustard
¼ cup white vinegar
¼ cup water
1 egg plus 1 egg yolk, lightly beaten
3 tablespoons butter, softened

Salad

4 cups fresh 1-inch broccoli florets
2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
½ medium red onion, sliced in ⅛-inch thick rings
1 can (11 ounces) mandarin oranges, drained
6 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
½ cup slivered almonds, toasted
½ cup golden raisins

In a large saucepan, combine the sugar, cornstarch and mustard. Combine vinegar and water, and stir into sugar mixture until smooth. Cook and stir over medium-high heat until thickened and bubbly. Reduce heat; cook and stir 2 minutes longer. Remove from heat.

Stir a small amount of hot filling into egg and yolk; return all to pan, stirring constantly. Bring to a gentle boil; cook and stir 2 minutes longer. Remove from heat. Gently stir in mayonnaise and butter. Cool to room temperature without stirring. Chill.

In a large salad bowl, combine the broccoli, mushrooms, onion, oranges, bacon, almonds and raisins. Pour dressing over salad; toss to coat. Store in refrigerator.

Yield: 10–12 servings

Peanut Butter Brownie Trifle

1 fudge brownie mix (13-by-9-inch pan size)
1 package (10 ounces) peanut butter chips
2 packages (13 ounces each) miniature peanut butter cups
4 cups cold 2% milk
2 packages (5.1 ounces each) instant vanilla pudding mix
1 cup creamy peanut butter
4 teaspoons vanilla extract
3 cartons (8 ounces each) frozen whipped topping, thawed

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Prepare brownie batter according to package directions; stir in peanut butter chips. Bake in a greased 13-by-9-inch baking pan 20–25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out with moist crumbs (do not overbake). Cool on a wire rack; cut into ¾-inch pieces.

Cut peanut butter cups in half; set aside ⅓ cup for garnish. In a large bowl, whisk milk and pudding mixes for 2 minutes (mixture will be thick). Add peanut butter and vanilla; mix well. Fold in 1½ cartons whipped topping.

Place a third of the brownies in a 5-quart glass bowl; top with a third of the remaining peanut butter cups. Spoon a third of the pudding mixture over the top. Repeat layers twice. Cover with remaining whipped topping; garnish with reserved peanut butter cups. Refrigerate until chilled.

Find more than 500 recipes at carolinacountry.com

Recipes here are by Taste of Home magazine,unless otherwise indicated. For a sample copy, send $2 to Taste of Home, Suite 4321, PO Box 990, Greendale WI 53129-0990. Visit the Web page at tasteofhome.com.

Grilled Prosciutto Asparagus

½ pound thinly sliced prosciutto
1 log (4 ounces) fresh goat cheese
1 pound fresh asparagus, trimmed

Cut prosciutto slices in half; spread with cheese. Wrap a prosciutto piece around two asparagus spear; secure ends with toothpicks. Using long-handled tongs, moisten a paper towel with cooking oil anc lightly coat the grill rack. Grill, covered, over medium heat for 6–8 minutes or until prosciutto is crisp, turning once. Discard toothpicks.

Yield: 2 dozen

From Your Kitchen

Layered Lettuce Salad

1 head of lettuce, broken into small pieces
3 hard boiled eggs, sliced
2 cans (10 ounces each) garden peas
½ cup diced green pepper
½ cup diced onion
10 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
2 cups mayonnaise
2 tablespoons sugar
8 ounces cheddar cheese, grated

In a clear bowl or trifle dish, layer first 6 ingredients in order shown. Combine mayonnaise and sugar and spread evenly over top of salad. Sprinkle with cheese. Cover and refrigerate 8 to 12 hours.

This recipe comes from Charlotte Bartholomew of Newport

Send Us Your Recipes

Contributors whose recipes are published will receive $25. We retain reprint rights for all submissions. Recipes submitted are not necessarily entirely original. Include your name, address, phone number (for questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Mail to: Carolina Country Kitchen, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611 or E-mail to: Jenny.Lloyd@carolinacountry.com.

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